This Old House

TOP 100!
Our fave gifts & product picks
p. 67

Holiday-ready home ideas

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013

Contents

THIS OLD HOUSE NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013

Holiday-ready home ideas

40 **get this look for less**
Colorful holiday hearth

92 **29 super-fast fixes, upkeep shortcuts, and easy upgrades**
Ensure that your house will pass even the most demanding visitor's scrutiny

idea file

31 **before + after: kitchen** Thanks to a low-key recipe, a dark and downbeat cook space becomes a bright, cheerful family gathering spot

35 **before + after: bath**
A tweaked layout, warm finishes, and vintage accents bring a touch of serenity—and privacy—to a master bath

46 **Photoshop redo**
Craftsman-style details and a larger porch give a bland bungalow a pop of personality

82 **cleaning up a classic Craftsman** A wife's old-house love affair inspires a couple's thoughtful (and green) renovation project

88 **dining room drama**
Use bold colors to create a visual feast where you dine

PHOTOS (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): TED MORRISON; JOHN GRUEN; TED MORRISON; JOHN GRUEN

Cover Photograph by JOHN GRUEN
Styling by JORGE ARANGO

Contents

THIS OLD HOUSE NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013

Watch videos and see more photos!
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home solutions

17 Serve guests from a festive beverage cart you can DIY in a day; 10 uses for wood dowels; burglar-proof your house; Christmas-tree buying guide; budget-friendly home-office redo; the 411 on electric knife sharpeners; and more

upgrades

67 the TOH top 100
All the coolest new products to make your house smarter and more stylish

how-to projects

43 paint ideas Give bookshelves and display pieces a character boost with these shades

50 build it or buy it
Upholstered headboard

59 weekend remodel
Our step-by-step shows you how to give a room an elegant upgrade with a low-profile coffered ceiling

ask this old house

99 Q + A Get the air out of a water-heating system; deter foliage-feasting deer; remove cracked and peeling wood veneer; when to use nails and when to use screws; and more

102 step-by-step
Install cabinet doors with concealed hinges

IN EVERY ISSUE

9 *letter from* This Old House
11 *reader mail*
12 *digital highlights*
14 *checklist*
106 *directory*
114 *save this old house*

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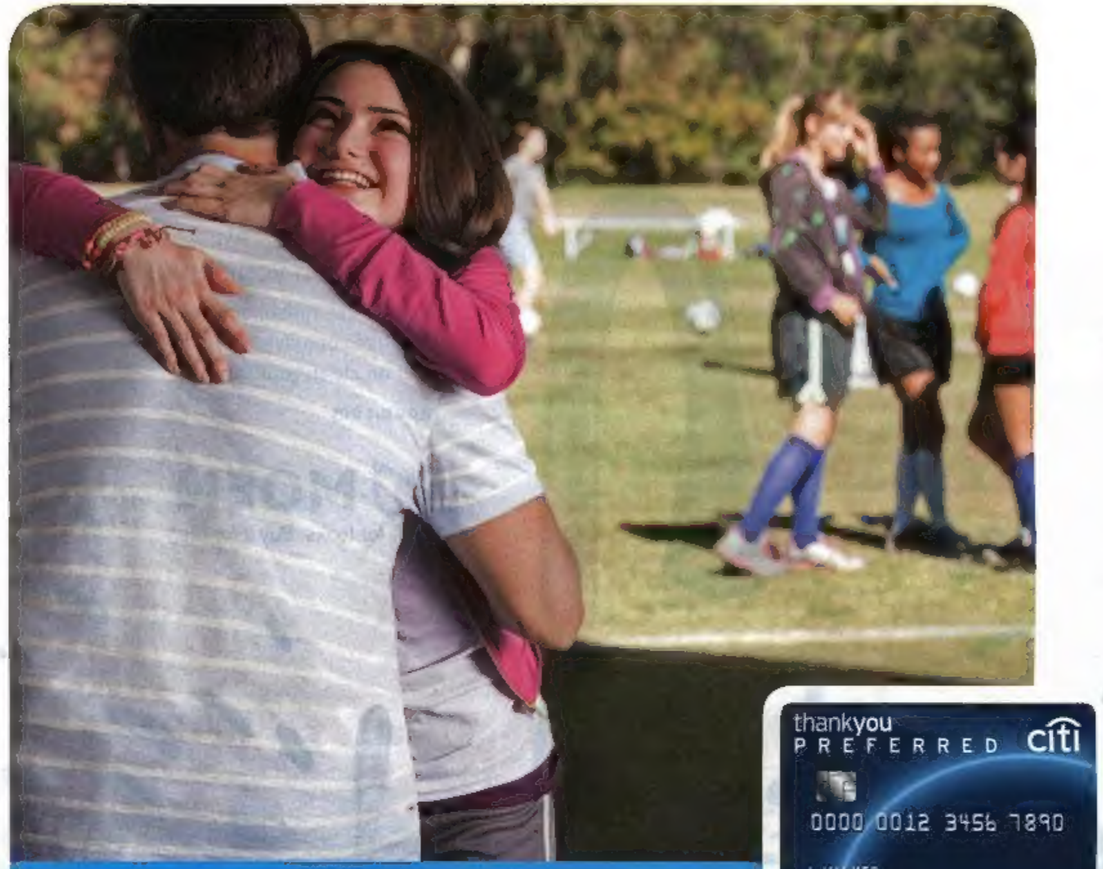

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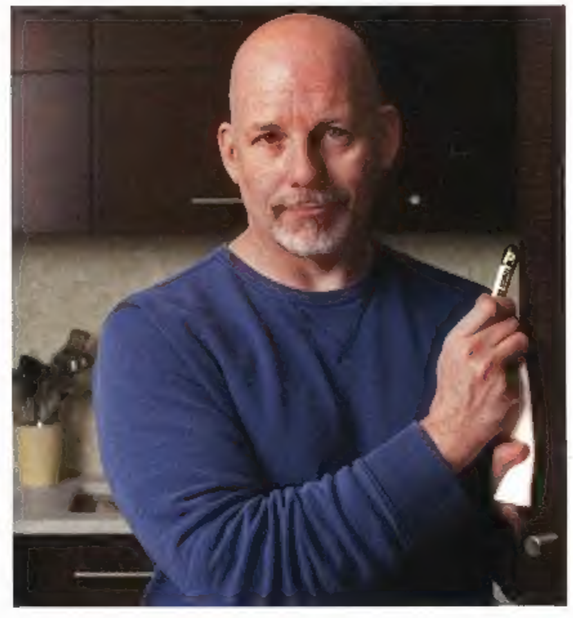

The editor, not in the shower.

If you're a regular reader of Letter From *This Old House*, you know the picture at right usually matches up with my note pretty well. This issue it doesn't. I figured I'd spare you, since this story starts with me standing in ankle-deep water in the shower.

You're welcome.

It had been that way each morning for a week, ever since I dropped my razor and watched it hit the tub and break, with half its handle slipping down the drain to lodge somewhere in the trap, impossible to reach.

Why didn't I deal with the clog sooner? That's hard to say, but I think you'd find part of the answer in the same place that you'd learn why I've left that last foot of living room baseboard unpainted for a month, why the second of the three bulbs in the chandelier has never been replaced, and why I still haven't caulked between the counter and backsplash since I installed them, in 2009. Maybe you have some of those same lingering bothers in your own home. I understand: You've got more pressing maintenance to do, the problem's inconvenient but not unlivable, there's an *NCIS* marathon on cable...

In the case of my slow drain, some of the delay was also due to the fact that I didn't know exactly how to fix it. Liquid-Plumr wasn't going to dissolve plastic. A snake wasn't likely to bust through it.

And so my shower included a footbath—until one day at work, when special projects editor Eric Hagerman had his team call in scores of products to review for our annual TOH Top 100. Mixed in with that pile, the best of which you'll find starting on page 67, I saw something called The Drain Genie, an attachment for your Shop-Vac that promises to "clear clogs in seconds."

Seemed improbable to me, sucking up clogs. *But,* I thought, *what, besides prurny feet, have I got to lose?* And so I pinched the product to use over the weekend.

That Saturday, as soon as I flipped the switch on the vacuum, I knew I had—along with the razor handle, a couple of chips of soap, and a hair ball (clearly not mine)—the 101st product for the Top 100. Let's call it the Top 100 Editor's Pick, a bonus item that you've just got to try. It may well be the second-best 10 bucks you'll ever spend.

SCOTT OMELIANUK, EDITOR
scott@thisoldhouse.com

P.S. The first-best 10 bucks is, of course, a gift subscription to *TOH* for a friend or family member. Actually, it's only eight bucks if you buy two, but you get my point: Where else can spending so little save someone unspent hundreds in plumber's bills? Get 'em at thisoldhouse.com/give-gift.

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PHOTOS: (TOP) IAN SPANIER; (BOTTOM) WENDELL T. WEBBER

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Reader mail

THE BIG REVEAL *of This Old House editor Scott Omelianuk's rowhouse redo brought many e-mails of congrats. We also received thanks for our feature on avoiding invasive plants, plus a painting tip and a reader project that transformed a plain porch floor.*

Scott's remodel

Thank you for the story and photos of Scott's remodel ["Colorful Story," September 2013 or thisoldhouse.com/novdec2013]. After reading about it in so many of his columns, it was wonderful to see the finished product! The indecision and compromises on color choices he and his wife experienced are major elements of redoing a house with a partner.

—MICHELE EIFERT FERGUSON, SPENCERPORT, N.Y.

Noninvasive alternatives

I want to express a sincere thank-you for "Plant This, Not That!" [September 2013]. As the coordinator of a local cooperative's weed-management program, I work with land managers and landowners to control invasive plants. Some of our most costly plant infestations could be prevented if folks were more aware of the invasive nature of some of their favorite ornamentals.

—KARI HAGENOW, GREEN BAY, WISC.

EDITORS' NOTE:
A number of readers also wrote to ask for help in finding the paint color of the master bedroom, Windmill. It turns out this shade has been discontinued, but the manufacturer, Valspar, suggests Thorny Brush as a close match.

VALSPAR
Thorny Brush

Spindle headboard

[Re September's Home Center Project, on making a headboard from staircase parts] I usually try to prime all the pieces (and sometimes top-coat also) before putting a multipiece together. It saves a lot of time, and you get a smoother finish, even if you may have to touch up some spots.

—BOB HINES, BENTON, KY.

READER PROJECT OF THE MONTH

Painted porch floor

COLLETTE CROYLE, LEWISTOWN, PA.

Our large screened porch was lacking luster with a concrete floor painted in beige. When I saw the basketweave pattern in "Flair Underfoot," August 2013 [above right], I knew I had to try it. Wow, what a difference it made! Using a masonry paint roller added to the texture of the concrete, for a realistic look. Thank you for another successful project!

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PROJECT OF THE WEEK

HOW TO
INSTALL A DISHWASHER

If you are ready to replace your outdated dishwasher, be sure to select an ENERGY STAR–qualified model, which can save you more than $30 a year on power and almost 500 gallons of water. These units have sensors that self-adjust to wash with just the right amount of water. And today's models are so good at scrubbing, you don't have to prerinse in the sink—which means even less of your hard-earned money will go down the drain. But the biggest cost-saver of all is that you can install one yourself

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Your craziest home holiday disaster stories!

Floods, fire, and invading varmints are just some of the calamities you've endured while friends and family gathered. See them all at **thisoldhouse.com/holiday-disasters**

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Page 61
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Page 86
Shortcut to the TOH Wayfair boutique to shop for a similar look

Page 91
Instructions on how to access our tablet edition for more color palettes

Page 97
Even more fast fixes and easy upgrades to ready your house for guests

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Checklist

Easy ways to improve your home right now

6 FAST FIXES

☐ **Change smoke detector batteries:** You're resetting the clocks on November 3, so now's the time. While you're at it, replace the batteries in carbon monoxide detectors, too.

☐ **Insulate pipes:** Add foam insulation to any exposed plumbing to keep the lines from freezing when the cold sets in.

☐ **Stock the guest room:** Get it ready for overnight company with plenty of hangers, a place to stow visitors' belongings, and enough towels and blankets for their stay.

☐ **Protect tree trunks:** Shield young trees from sun scald and frost damage by wrapping their trunks in burlap.

☐ **Prep your entry for guests:** Tighten handrails and add a slip-proof doormat outside; keep deicers or sand on hand in case of snow flurries.

☐ **Tune up your garage door:** Don't get left out in the cold! Use motor oil to lubricate the door's track and ensure that it operates smoothly.

☑ Pot some amaryllis

Plant these bulbs now to see their sensational blooms by the holidays. This tropical flower, native to South America and South Africa, does best in direct light and warm temps—68 to 70 degrees F is ideal. Pot bulbs in sturdy earthenware containers (lightweight ones may tip) about an inch or two larger in diameter than the bulb, and cover up to the neck with a fast-draining potting mix. Water sparingly until stems appear; you should see blooms in seven to 10 weeks.

☐ Keep up your compost

Winter's cold can slow the decomposition that turns kitchen scraps into garden gold, but you can still get rich fertilizer for spring with a little help. To give bacteria more surface area to munch on—and help them break down organic matter faster—chop or shred waste before adding it to the heap, and keep the pile covered with a tarp to hold in the heat.

☐ Prevent sap stains

If the sticky stuff gets on carpets or upholstery, freeze it with an ice cube before scraping it off; if that doesn't work, try drying it out with rubbing alcohol. Clean off messy hands by rubbing them with sap-busting olive oil before washing with soap and water.

☐ Test sink shutoff valves

In a plumbing emergency, shutoff valves are a lifesaver, but otherwise they can be overlooked—which can make them tricky to operate when the need arises. For peace of mind when guests are expected, give all the valves a turn, just to ensure that mineral deposits don't freeze them in the OFF position. (If they're stuck, use a wrench.) Then turn them on and off once or twice a year from here on out.

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home solutions

Edited by Michelle Brunner

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PHOTO (LEFT): MONICA BUCK. STYLING: INGRID LEESS

Raise the bar for entertaining

'Tis the season for company and cocktails, and that calls for a festive spot to mix libations. We turned a small bookcase into the drinks station shown here in a few steps. After coating it with glossy red paint—Benjamin Moore's Tomato Red—we installed a rack for stemware and a towel bar so that spill relief is never far ($13 and $11 each; amazon.com). Adding casters ($6 for two; homedepot.com) allows for wheeling the party into any room. Let the good times roll!

Wood dowels

There's more to these woodworking staples than reinforcing joints. Give them a whirl with these ideas

1> **Spread grout evenly.** Use the end of a small dowel to push in grout around a faucet or a hard-to-reach corner

2> **Relaminate a countertop.** Apply contact cement to the underlayment and the backside of laminate that is starting to lift. Lay a dowel across the counter, then roll it while pressing down so that the laminate adheres evenly

3> **Make a twine dispenser.** Using a jigsaw, cut a 6-inch circle from ¾-inch scrap wood. Drill halfway through the disk's center with a ½-inch Forstner bit. Fasten a ½-inch dowel to the disk with a 1½-inch wood screw. Slip on a roll of twine

4> **Prepare pastry.** No pin? Use a 1½-inch (or bigger) dowel to roll out dough. Before you use the dowel, rub mineral oil on it and wipe off. Flour your rolling surface so that the dough doesn't stick.

5> **Weigh down a wall hanging.** Thread a dowel into the bottom hem so that it lays flat

6> **Construct a lantern.** Cut two same-size squares from ¾-inch scrap wood for the top and bottom. Using a ½-inch Forstner bit, drill holes at the four corners for equal lengths of ½-inch dowels. Use wood glue to secure the dowels in the holes. Set a glass-enclosed candle inside.

7> **Support a shelf.** Mark the interior sides of a bookcase where you want to add a shelf. Drill holes for an equal-length pair of ⅝-inch dowels. Use wood glue to secure the dowels, set the shelf on top

8> **Roast some marshmallows.** Toast a wintry treat over a crackling fire during the cold months. To minimize charring, soak 3-foot sections of small dowels in water for at least 30 minutes beforehand.

9> **Hang curtains on the cheap.** Cut a 1½-inch dowel to your desired length, the rod should extend at least 3 to 6 inches past the sides of the window casing. Drill pilot holes in the dowel ends to accept threaded cabinet-knob finials, hang on brackets

10> **Neatly store leftover giftwrap.** Roll wrapping-paper remnants around a large dowel, secure the paper's end with low-adhesion painter's tape.

—KATE HILL

PHOTOS: TOP RIGHT, FED HARRISON; JAN KRANER

Cleaner air, same warm glow

Wood fires are cozy, but they wreak havoc on air quality, emitting carbon monoxide and lung-irritating particulates. Luckily, home centers are stocked with plenty of greener options.

What's hot: You'll find several types of logs made almost entirely of recycled content. Some are made of wax-coated cardboard boxes once used to transport produce, such as CleanFlame (six for about $22; cleanflame.com for retailers) and Enviro-Log (six for $16; homedepot.com). Others use sawdust or wood fiber, such as North Idaho Energy Logs (six for $12; northidaho energylogs.com).

Why they're healthier: Waxed-cardboard logs emit up to 80 percent less carbon monoxide. They also emit about a third the particulates of real wood logs, and up to 86 percent less creosote, reducing chimney buildup. Wood-fiber logs with no added binders can produce as much as 80 percent fewer hazardous air pollutants and up to 75 percent less carbon monoxide; the materials compressed and heated, fused by wood's natural starches. Both types burn so cleanly you could cook over them.

What you should know: Thanks to their density, these greener logs generate a lot more heat than real wood. Most 4- or 5-pound logs burn for up to three hours. North Idaho's at 8 pounds, last as long as 8 hours.

NATALIA KNOCHOWSKI

PHOTOS: (LEFT) MONICA BUCK-KNIGHT; (RIGHT) ALSON ROSA STYLING; ALEX HILLKER; INGRID TESS; (OPPOSITE) COURTESY OF EDWIN ROTHERINGHAM

Home security hit list

Planning on leaving town for the holidays? Your empty house is an easy target for burglars. Deter them with these tactical tips from Los Angeles–based security expert Chris McGoey. —M. BRUNNER

DO LIGHT UP AT NIGHT: Set manual timers to turn indoor lights on and off during evening hours, or try a remote device that allows you to flick the switch using your tablet or smartphone, like the WeMo Light Switch ($50; belkin.com).

DON'T ADVERTISE YOUR ABSENCE: Ask a trusted neighbor to collect your mail and newspaper every day. Also resist the urge to update your status on social media to reflect that you're away from home (for instance, visiting the folks in Delaware).

DO REINFORCE YOUR DOOR: If you've got a wood door, ambush the rock-strike plate is the weakest point in your door. Upgrade to a heavy-duty strike plate, and use four 3-inch screws to secure it to the doorframe.

DON'T NEGLECT YOUR WINDOWS: Adopt a second line of defense for ground-floor windows, where 23 percent of breakins occur. Insert sash pins to secure double-hung styles, or consider arming windows with a wireless alarm.

Panasonic

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FABRIC PREFERRED

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

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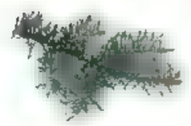
IKEA

EKTORP sofa $499 Cotton, linen, viscose, rayon and polyester removable cover. Imported. Requires assembly. Svanby gray. EKTORP has a 10-year limited warranty. See IKEA store or IKEA-USA.com for details. Valid in US IKEA stores. See IKEA store for country of origin information.

The Life Improvement Store

Demystifying tree buying

You couldn't pick a better year to buy a real Christmas tree—experts say you'll see a wider variety of species and sizes. But which type is right for you? Read on for our guide to five of the best-selling conifers PAUL HOPE



Blue spruce

SHAPE: Perfectly symmetrical, this tree looks full with few gaps

NEEDLES: Short blue needles are 1 inch to 1½ inches long with an extremely sharp point at the end.

SCENT: Mild aroma, but if you crush the needles, they produce a resiny smell

TRIMMINGS: Holds most ornaments, prickly needles make inner-limb decorating a challenge

White pine

SHAPE. Elegantly conical, needles are grouped in clusters so you'll see more trunk.

NEEDLES. Long, flexible needles (2½ to 5 inches long) are gentle enough for delicate skin

SCENT: Minimal fragrance makes it a good choice for sensitive noses.

TRIMMINGS: More of a tinsel-and lights tree soft needles can cause ornaments to slip

Scotch pine

SHAPE: The most popular tree in the U.S., this pine is symmetrical and dense-looking, thanks to full branches.

NEEDLES: Bright green needles grow up to 3 inches long, resists shedding, even if you forget to water it.

SCENT: It has a lasting, pleasant piney aroma

TRIMMINGS: The branches are sturdy so bring on the heavy decorations

Balsam fir

SHAPE: A thin spire-like top (perfect for a star or an angel) sets this pyramid shaped tree apart.

NEEDLES: Short, long-lasting dark green needles are ¾ inch to 1½ inches long and tend to be flat or blunt at the tip

SCENT: Its strong evergreen scent can easily fill a room.

TRIMMINGS: Dense limbs can hold weighty ornaments and larger globe or C-bulb lights.

Fraser fir

SHAPE: The branches turn slightly upward, giving it a full, compact appearance.

NEEDLES: Short dark green needles have a silvery underside and are ½ to 1 inch long; resists shedding

SCENT: Its fresh, mild fragrance is subtler than the balsams.

TRIMMINGS: Thick branches will hold most decorations. It's easy to reach inter or branches, so cords are less visible

Little ways to save big on your heating bill

Installing a programmable thermostat is only one step in making your home more energy efficient. Here are three additional changes you can make this winter that yield worthwhile returns.

Turn it down, not off: Set your thermostat to turn back 7 to 10 degrees F for eight hours while you're away each day, doing so can shave 10 percent off your yearly bill. The optimal temperature for energy savings is 68 to 70 degrees F. However, if you have cast iron radiators or radiant floor heating, don't touch the dial; you'll waste more energy (and, ultimately, money) by changing the temperature than if you left it alone

Pad your nest—in the right places: Beefing up the insulation will help cut heating costs, especially if your house is old and drafty. Focus on the attic first, where heat escapes. (For specifics on how to insulate your attic, go to thisoldhouse.com/novdec2013.) The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that proper insulation can cut as much as 50 percent off your heating bill

Work with the weather: Boost the efficiency of your boiler by installing an outdoor reset control. On a 40-degree day, your boiler could fire to 180 degrees F every time you need heat, but it needs to reach that temp only when it's zero outside. A weather-sensitive system adjusts the temp based on how cold it actually is. For best results, install the sensor on a north-facing exterior wall away from drying or heating vents, and watch the savings—up to 12 percent—heat up. KATELIN HILL

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An organized office for $432

White-painted built-ins provide stylish storage from floor to ceiling—plus a bonus work surface

BEFORE

BEFORE. Clutter overwhelmed the small office, leaving little room to work. Dark, mismatched furniture made the space feel dreary. **AFTER:** Walls lined with fresh white shelves, drawers, and a second desk boost storage space and let the existing vintage desk take center stage.

HOME OFFICES CAN BE clutter magnets with too much stuff and not enough storage space. That's what Ronda Batcheldor found in her workspace, where documents, books, and craft supplies had taken over the small room. To restore order, Ronda plotted out wall-to-wall built-ins, but to keep costs down, she knew she'd have to get creative. Rather than build shelves from scratch, Ronda scoured local resale listings and secondhand shops for old TV cabinets, bookshelves, and a desk, which she bought piecemeal. Once she had found enough to fill two adjoining walls, she and husband Jules removed the room's baseboards and built a toekick platform out of 2×4s on which to rest the pieces. They fastened the storage units to the wall and bridged gaps with medium-density fiberboard (MDF). Above the built-in desk, Ronda created a paper-sorting station out of MDF and marked-down beadboard, embellishing it with molding and brackets. Finally, she reattached the old baseboards, topped the cabinetry with crown molding, and painted it all white. "It functions so well and gives my kids room to work, too," says Ronda. "Even if I'd spent thousands of dollars, I couldn't be any happier." MEGAN BAKER

THE PROJECT TALLY

TOTAL

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 126

ADVAIR

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If you have asthma or COPD, ADVAIR DISKUS may help you breathe better.™

Ask your doctor if ADVAIR is right for you. Visit ADVAIRsavings.com or call 1-800-523-1446

Approved Uses for ADVAIR DISKUS®

- ADVAIR DISKUS is for the treatment of asthma in patients 4 years and older. ADVAIR should be used only if your healthcare provider decides that your asthma is not well controlled with a long-term asthma control medicine, such as an inhaled corticosteroid.
- ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 is approved for adults with COPD, including chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both. You should only take 1 inhalation of ADVAIR twice a day. Higher doses will not provide additional benefits.
- ADVAIR DISKUS is not for, and should not be used to treat, sudden, severe symptoms of asthma or COPD. ADVAIR won't replace a rescue inhaler.

Important Safety Information About ADVAIR DISKUS

- People with asthma who take long-acting beta2-adrenergic agonist (LABA) medicines, such as salmeterol (one of the medicines in ADVAIR), have an increased risk of death from asthma problems. It is not known whether the combination of ADVAIR and the other medicine in ADVAIR increases the risk of death more than taking the other medicine alone.
- Call your healthcare provider if breathing problems worsen over time while using ADVAIR.
- Get emergency medical care if you have more than the usual amount of short-acting inhaled medicine, or your short-acting inhaled medicine does not relieve your breathing symptoms.
- Ask your healthcare provider when you should refill your medicine. Your asthma may worsen suddenly and you may need your short-acting inhaled medicine right away.
- When your LABA asthma medicine is used for the first time, it can help you breathe better within minutes. Tell your healthcare provider if you are using ADVAIR more often than prescribed, your healthcare provider may prescribe different medicines for you.
- Taking your LABA asthma medicines every day as prescribed, but not more than prescribed, may help prevent worsening asthma symptoms during the day and night.
- Do not use ADVAIR to treat sudden severe symptoms of asthma or COPD. Always have a rescue inhaler medicine with you to treat sudden symptoms.
- Do not stop ADVAIR without talking to your healthcare provider.
- **Do not use ADVAIR more often than prescribed. Do not take ADVAIR with other medicines that contain a LABA for any reason.** Ask your doctor or pharmacist about medicines that contain a LABA.
- **ADVAIR DISKUS can cause serious side effects, including:**
  - **serious allergic reactions.** If you have any of these symptoms, stop using ADVAIR and get emergency medical help right away: swelling of the face, mouth, and tongue, breathing problems.
  - **sudden breathing problems immediately after inhaling your medicine**
  - **effects on heart:** increased blood pressure, rapid pulse, chest pain
  - **effects on nervous system:** nervousness, tremor, headache
  - **reduced adrenal function (may result in loss of energy).**
  - **changes in blood (sugar, potassium, certain types of white blood cells).**
  - **weakened immune system and a higher chance of infections.** You should avoid people who have contagious diseases, and if you are exposed, tell your healthcare provider right away. Your healthcare provider may want to do a blood test to determine if you have had a serious infection. Some infections may be more serious or even life-threatening in people who are taking ADVAIR.
  - **lower bone mineral density.** Long-term use of inhaled corticosteroids may affect bone density in some people who have a higher risk of low bone density (osteoporosis).
  - **eye problems including glaucoma and cataracts.** You should have your eyes examined while using ADVAIR.
  - **slowed growth in children.** Asthma growth should be monitored in children.
  - **pneumonia.** People with COPD have a higher chance of getting pneumonia. Tell your healthcare provider if you have COPD and pneumonia. ADVAIR may increase the chance of getting pneumonia. Call your healthcare provider if you notice any of the following symptoms: increase in mucus, change in mucus color, fever, chills, increased cough, or increased breathing problems.
- **Common side effects of ADVAIR DISKUS for asthma include** upper respiratory tract infection, inflammation, thrush in the mouth and throat, bronchitis, sinusitis, and pain. Common side effects in children with asthma, infection, viral gastroenteritis (stomach flu), and nausea and vomiting.
- **Common side effects of ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 for COPD include** [illegible]

Please see Brief Summary of Important Safety Information about ADVAIR DISKUS on next page.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

GlaxoSmithKline

GSKforYou.com

1-866-GSK-FOR-U

ADVAIR DISKUS® 250/50

(fluticasone propionate 250 mcg and salmeterol 50 mcg inhalation powder)

ADVAIR DISKUS®

(fluticasone propionate and salmeterol inhalation powder) BRIEF SUMMARY

This summary does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment. See full Prescribing Information for complete product information.

What is the most important information I should know about ADVAIR DISKUS?

ADVAIR DISKUS can cause serious side effects, including:

1. **People with asthma who take long-acting beta$_2$-adrenergic agonist (LABA) medicines, such as salmeterol (one of the medicines in ADVAIR DISKUS), have an increased risk of death from asthma problems.** It is not known whether fluticasone propionate (the other medicine in ADVAIR DISKUS) reduces the risk of death from asthma problems seen with salmeterol.
   - **Call your healthcare provider if breathing problems worsen over time while using ADVAIR DISKUS.** You may need different treatment.
   - **Get emergency medical care if:**
     - breathing problems worsen quickly and
     - you use your rescue inhaler medicine, but it does not relieve your breathing problems.
2. ADVAIR DISKUS should be used only if your healthcare provider decides that your asthma is not well controlled with a long-term asthma control medicine, such as inhaled corticosteroids.
3. When your asthma is well controlled, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking ADVAIR DISKUS. Your healthcare provider will decide if you can stop ADVAIR DISKUS without loss of asthma control. Your healthcare provider may prescribe a different asthma control medicine for you, such as an inhaled corticosteroid.
4. Children and adolescents who take LABA medicines may have an increased risk of being hospitalized for asthma problems.

What is ADVAIR DISKUS?

- ADVAIR DISKUS combines an inhaled corticosteroid medicine, fluticasone propionate (the same medicine found in FLOVENT®), and a LABA medicine, salmeterol (the same medicine found in SEREVENT®).

  Inhaled corticosteroids help to decrease inflammation in the lungs. Inflammation in the lungs can lead to asthma symptoms.

  LABA medicines are used in people with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). LABA medicines help the muscles around the airways in your lungs stay relaxed to prevent symptoms, such as wheezing and shortness of breath. These symptoms can happen when the muscles around the airways tighten. This makes it hard to breathe. In severe cases, wheezing can stop your breathing and cause death if not treated right away.
- ADVAIR DISKUS is used for asthma and COPD as follows:

Asthma

ADVAIR DISKUS is used to control symptoms of asthma and to prevent symptoms such as wheezing in adults and children aged 4 years and older.

ADVAIR DISKUS contains salmeterol (the same medicine found in SEREVENT). LABA medicines, such as salmeterol, increase the risk of death from asthma problems.

ADVAIR DISKUS is not for adults and children with asthma who are well controlled with an asthma control medicine, such as a low to medium dose of an inhaled corticosteroid medicine.

COPD

COPD is a chronic lung disease that includes chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both. ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 is used long-term, 2 times each day, to help improve lung function for better breathing in adults with COPD. ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 has been shown to decrease the number of flare-ups and worsening of COPD symptoms (exacerbations).

Who should not use ADVAIR DISKUS?

Do not use ADVAIR DISKUS:

- to treat sudden, severe symptoms of asthma or COPD.
- if you have a severe allergy to milk proteins. Ask your doctor if you are not sure.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before using ADVAIR DISKUS?

Tell your healthcare provider about all of your health conditions, including if you:

- **have heart problems**
- **have high blood pressure**
- **have seizures**
- **have thyroid problems**
- **have diabetes**
- **have liver problems**
- **have osteoporosis**
- **have an immune system problem**
- **are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.** It is not known if ADVAIR DISKUS may harm your unborn baby.
- **are breastfeeding.** It is not known if ADVAIR DISKUS passes into your milk and if it can harm your baby.
- **are allergic to any of the ingredients in ADVAIR DISKUS, any other medicines, or food products.**
- **are exposed to chickenpox or measles.**

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. ADVAIR DISKUS and certain other medicines may interact with each other. This may cause serious side effects. Especially, tell your healthcare provider if you take ritonavir. The anti-HIV medicines NORVIR® (ritonavir capsules), Soft Gelatin NORVIR® ritonavir oral solution), and KALETRA® (lopinavir/ritonavir) Tablets contain ritonavir.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist each time you get a new medicine.

How do I use ADVAIR DISKUS?

Do not use ADVAIR DISKUS unless your healthcare provider has taught you and you understand everything. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have any questions.

- Children should use ADVAIR DISKUS with an adult's help, as instructed by the child's healthcare provider.
- Use ADVAIR DISKUS exactly as prescribed. **Do not use ADVAIR DISKUS more often than prescribed.** ADVAIR DISKUS comes in 3 strengths. Your healthcare provider has prescribed the one that is best for your condition.
- The usual dosage of ADVAIR DISKUS is 1 inhalation 2 times each day (morning and evening). The 2 doses should be about 12 hours apart. Rinse your mouth with water after using ADVAIR DISKUS.
- If you take more ADVAIR DISKUS than your doctor has prescribed, get medical help right away. If you have any unusual symptoms, such as worsening shortness of breath, chest pain, increased heart rate, or shakiness.
- If you miss a dose of ADVAIR DISKUS, just skip that dose. Take your next dose at your usual time. Do not take 2 doses at one time.
- Do not use a spacer device with ADVAIR DISKUS.
- Do not breathe into ADVAIR DISKUS.
- **While you are using ADVAIR DISKUS 2 times each day, do not use other medicines that contain a LABA for any reason.** Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if any of your other medicines are LABA medicines.
- Do not stop using ADVAIR DISKUS or other asthma medicines unless told to do so by your healthcare provider because your symptoms might get worse. Your healthcare provider will change your medicines as needed.
- ADVAIR DISKUS does not relieve sudden symptoms. Always have a rescue inhaler medicine with you to treat sudden symptoms. If you do not have an inhaled, short-acting bronchodilator, call your healthcare provider to have one prescribed for you.

Call your healthcare provider or get medical care right away if:

- your breathing problems worsen with ADVAIR DISKUS.
- you need to use your rescue inhaler medicine more often than usual.
- your rescue inhaler medicine does not work as well for you at relieving symptoms.
- you need to use 4 or more inhalations of your rescue inhaler medicine for 2 or more days in a row.
- you use 1 whole canister of your rescue inhaler medicine in 8 weeks' time.
- your peak flow meter results decrease. Your healthcare provider will tell you the numbers that are right for you.
- you have asthma and your symptoms do not improve after using ADVAIR DISKUS regularly for 1 week.

What are the possible side effects with ADVAIR DISKUS?

- **ADVAIR DISKUS can cause serious side effects, including:**
- **See "What is the most important information I should know about ADVAIR DISKUS?"**
- **serious allergic reactions.** Call your healthcare provider or get emergency medical care if you get any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction:
  - rash
  - hives
  - swelling of the face, mouth, and tongue
  - breathing problems
- **sudden breathing problems immediately after inhaling your medicine**
- **effects on heart**
  - increased blood pressure
  - a fast and regular heartbeat
  - chest pain
- **effects on nervous system**
  - tremor
  - nervousness
- **reduced adrenal function (may result in loss of energy)**
- **changes in blood (sugar, potassium, certain types of white blood cells)**
- **weakened immune system and a higher chance of infections**
- **lower bone mineral density.** This may be a problem for people who already have a higher chance of low bone density (osteoporosis).
- **eye problems including glaucoma and cataracts.** You should have regular eye exams while using ADVAIR DISKUS.
- **slowed growth in children.** A child's growth should be checked often.
- **pneumonia.** People with COPD have a higher chance of getting pneumonia. ADVAIR DISKUS may increase the chance of getting pneumonia. Call your healthcare provider if you notice any of the following symptoms:
  - increase in mucus (sputum) production
  - change in mucus color
  - fever
  - chills
  - increased cough
  - increased breathing problems

Common side effects of ADVAIR DISKUS include:

Asthma:

- upper respiratory tract infection
- throat irritation
- hoarseness and voice changes
- thrush in the mouth and throat
- bronchitis
- cough
- headache
- nausea and vomiting

COPD:

- thrush in the mouth and throat
- throat irritation
- hoarseness and voice changes
- viral respiratory infections
- headache
- muscle and bone pain

In children with asthma, infections in the ear, nose, and throat are common.

Tell your healthcare provider about any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the side effects with ADVAIR DISKUS. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for additional information about ADVAIR DISKUS. You can also contact the company that makes ADVAIR DISKUS (toll-free) at 1-888-825-5249 or at www.advair.com.

GlaxoSmithKline
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709
ADD:XMG January 2011

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ALL NEW EPISODES!
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Lumber Liquidators flooring has been seen on: This Old House

No bigger, lots brighter

A dim, dated space gets a clean sweep with large new windows and white painted woodwork BY DEBORAH BALDWIN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN GRUEN

EVER WONDER WHAT A contractor chooses for his own cook space? One peek inside the home of Seth Churchill, who runs a design-build firm with his brother, Rafe, suggests that when you've seen it all, you may actually want less. The two men had put in countless kitchens before tackling the one Seth shares with his wife, Kelly, and their two young kids. Tucked at the back of an 1890s cottage, in Lakeville, Connecticut, the space hadn't been updated in decades. With Seth as general contractor, Rafe as designer, and Kelly as co-client, the kitchen could have veered toward luxe. But the home's low-key style turned out to be the design's big idea. "Too often, kitchens are overbuilt," says Rafe. "We wanted one that would follow the spirit of the house." The result: simple Shaker cabinets, white-washed beadboard walls, and an island canti-evered to allow guests to pull up an extra stool or two.

Now, says Seth, "the family is there all the time." And no wonder. "We see a lot of kitchens," he notes. "It's refreshing to walk into one that is bright, clean, and crisp."

BEFORE Dark finishes and a low ceiling contributed to the downbeat feel. AFTER Painted beadboard, open shelves, large new windows, and a ceiling that angles up into attic space make the footprint feel bigger. The island serves as a social spot but also packs a dishwasher and drawers for pots and utensils. *Butcher block island top: John Boos.*

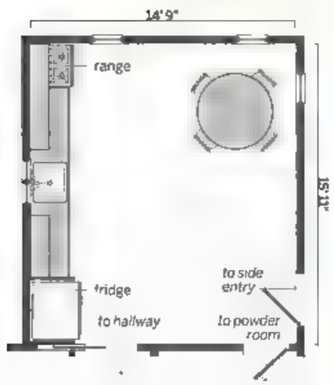
BEFORE

Crown molding marks the height of the ceiling before the redo. The sleek fridge helps ground the period-inspired kitchen in the present. *Refrigerator Jenn-Air. Pendant light Rejuvenation*

New wood-frame double-pane windows with nearly invisible screens amplify the flow of light and air. *Windows Pella. Sink and faucet Waterworks*

before

The one-wall kitchen in the 225-square-foot space turned the cook's back to the table.



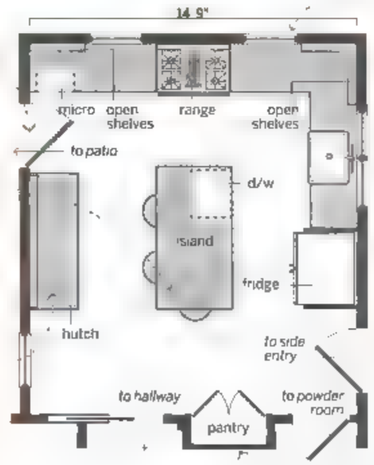
after

The new U-shape layout, with a 3½-by-6-foot island at its center, is all about function and socializing.

1] Added a doorway for a more direct connection to the back patio

2] Installed an island with prep space and a dishwasher steps from the new cooking and cleanup zones

3] After shifting a window, made a mock hutch with open shelves and base cabinets.



4] Put in large new windows for added light and air in the cooking zone

5] Built a pantry for staples that otherwise might go in upper cabinets

FLOOR PLANS: AIR WORKPOINT

pro advice SETH CHURCHILL, GENERAL CONTRACTOR, SHARON, CONN.

"Prime beaded boards and give them a coat of paint before installing them. That way, if the wood expands and contracts, you won't see raw wood in between them."

Open shelves, soapstone countertops, and a four-light paneled door reinforce the cottage look. *Door Simpson Door Company*

Simple brackets pair well with the 3½-inch beadboard, which went up piece by piece.

Windows flanking the range reward prep work with views of the yard. A beadboard hood camouflages the high-powered vent fan. *Windows Pella. Range and range-hood liner Viking. Paint Benjamin Moore's Decorator White*

20 MORE CHARMERS

To check out This Old House editors' favorite cottage kitchens, scan this page using your mobile device and the Blippar app, or visit **thisoldhouse.com/novdec2013**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

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Smarter layout, vintage details

An outdated master bath gains function and flair, thanks to a makeover that maximizes space—and style BY AMANDA LECKY • PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATHAN KIRKMAN

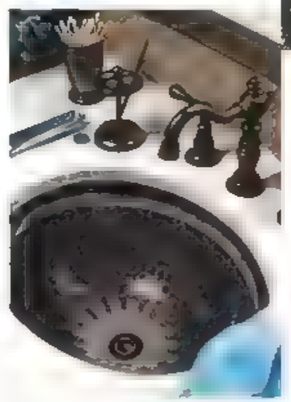
DEALING WITH THE unfortunate renovation choices of previous owners is a fact of life for many home buyers. When Marc and Sarah Chodera purchased their 1887 Stick-style house, in Chicago, the master bath was a major disappointment. "It was pure 1980s," Sarah says of the hard-edged, white-tiled space with its claustrophobic shower and jetted tub—and no privacy, a problem because the couple would be sharing the bath with their son, now 9, and daughter, 4. To the rescue: designer Aimee Wertepny, who tweaked the layout to reclaim wasted space without moving plumbing lines. The result is a distinctive room with warm cherry cabinets, vintage-style sconces, and earth-tone finishes that echo details found elsewhere in the period house. Just as important are the larger shower, accented with a panel of bronze penny tiles, the claw-foot tub illuminated by a small chandelier, and the separate toilet room. Says Sarah, "Now it's a quiet, serene place to start and end the day."

BEFORE

BEFORE The 1980s bath, with its expanses of white square tile and its clunky spa tub, was out of place in the 1887 house. **AFTER** Rich wood cabinets, vintage details, and a reconfigured layout make the room as stylish as it is efficient.

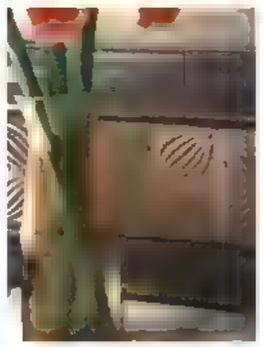
A claw-foot tub with a wall-mount high-arc spigot is lit by a vintage-look chandelier. *Lighting Visual Comfort*

The generously sized shower features a frameless glass door and a panel of metallic penny-round tiles accented with cove lighting. *Tile Ann Sacks*



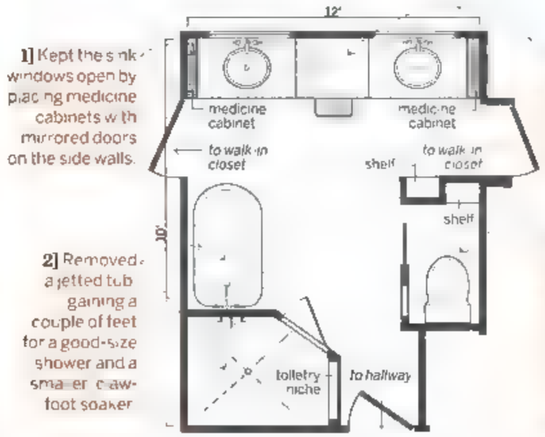
The bronze-finish ceramic sinks, with their serpentine design, add a bit of unexpected pattern and texture. *Sink Kohler*

Flower-motif tiles echo a design element found elsewhere in the house. *Tile Busby Gilbert*



before + after

The fixture locations stayed the same in the 120-square-foot bath, but better use of space allowed for a bigger shower and a toilet room.



1] Kept the sink windows open by placing medicine cabinets with mirrored doors on the side walls.

2] Removed a jetted tub gaining a couple of feet for a good-size shower and a smaller claw-foot soaker

3] Added a stool-height counter between the sinks for a makeup table

4] Enclosed the toilet behind a space-saving pocket door adding privacy in a bath used by the whole family

FLOOR PLAN: AL WORPOLE

pro advice

AIMEE WERTEPNY, DESIGNER, CHICAGO

"Bath lighting is important not just so that you can see what you're doing but also to create focal points. Be sure to install dimmers to set the mood."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

For people with a higher risk of stroke due to Atrial Fibrillation (AFib) not caused by a heart valve problem

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- ELIQUIS can cause bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death
- You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, NSAIDs, warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, SSRIs or SNRIs, and other blood thinners. Tell your doctor about all medicines, vitamins and supplements you take. While taking ELIQUIS, you may bruise more easily and it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop.
- Get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding.
  - unexpected bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as unusual bleeding from the gums, nosebleeds that happen often, or menstrual or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
  - bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
  - red, pink, or brown urine; red or black stools (looks like tar)
  - coughing up or vomiting blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds
  - unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain, headaches, feeling dizzy or weak
- ELIQUIS is not for patients with artificial heart valves.
- Before you take ELIQUIS, tell your doctor if you have kidney or liver problems, any other medical condition, or ever had bleeding problems

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant or breastfeed

- Do not take ELIQUIS if you currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding or have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS. A reaction to ELIQUIS can cause hives, rash, itching, and possibly trouble breathing. Get medical help right away if you have sudden chest pain or chest tightness, have sudden swelling of your face or tongue, have trouble breathing, wheezing, or feeling dizzy or faint

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088

Please see additional Important Product Information on the adjacent page.

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Eliquis

IMPORTANT FACTS

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The information below does not take the place of talking with your healthcare professional. Only your healthcare professional knows the specifics of your condition and how ELIQUIS® may fit into your overall therapy. Talk to your healthcare professional if you have any questions about ELIQUIS (pronounced ELL ee kwiss).

What is the most important information I should know about ELIQUIS (apixaban)?

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ELIQUIS can cause bleeding which can be serious and rarely may lead to death. This is because ELIQUIS is a blood thinner medicine that reduces blood clotting.

You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (called NSAIDs), warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), or serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), and other medicines to help prevent or treat blood clots.

Tell your doctor if you take any of these medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is one listed above.

While taking ELIQUIS,

- you may bruise more easily
- it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop

Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding when taking ELIQUIS:

- unexpected bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as
  - unusual bleeding from the gums
  - nosebleeds that happen often
  - menstrual bleeding or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
- red, pink, or brown urine
- red or black stools (looks like tar)
- cough up blood or blood clots
- vomit blood or your vomit looks like coffee grounds
- unexpected pain, swelling or joint pain
- headaches, feeling dizzy or weak

ELIQUIS (apixaban) is not for patients with artificial heart valves.

What is ELIQUIS?

ELIQUIS is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation.

It is not known if ELIQUIS is safe and effective in children.

Who should not take ELIQUIS?

Do not take ELIQUIS if you:

- currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding
- have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS. Ask your doctor if you are not sure.

What should I tell my doctor before taking ELIQUIS?

Before you take ELIQUIS, tell your doctor if you:

- have kidney or liver problems
- have any other medical condition
- have ever had bleeding problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if ELIQUIS will harm your unborn baby
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if ELIQUIS passes into your breast milk. You and your doctor should decide if you will take ELIQUIS or breastfeed. You should not do both.

Tell all of your doctors and dentists that you are taking ELIQUIS. They should talk to the doctor who prescribed ELIQUIS for you, before you have **any** surgery, medical or dental procedure.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some of your other medicines may affect the way ELIQUIS works. Certain medicines may increase your risk of bleeding or stroke when taken with ELIQUIS.

How should I take ELIQUIS (apixaban)?

Take ELIQUIS exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Take ELIQUIS twice every day with or without food, and do not change your dose or stop taking it unless your doctor tells you to. If you miss a dose of ELIQUIS, take it as soon as you remember, and do not take more than one dose at the same time. **Do not run out of ELIQUIS. Refill your prescription before you run out. Stopping ELIQUIS may increase your risk of having a stroke.**

What are the possible side effects of ELIQUIS?

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  - swelling of your face or tongue
  - trouble breathing or wheezing
  - feeling dizzy or faint

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away. These are not all of the possible side effects of ELIQUIS. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

This is a brief summary of the most important information about ELIQUIS. For more information, talk with your doctor or pharmacist, call 1-855-ELIQUIS (1-855-354-7847), or go to www.ELIQUIS.com.

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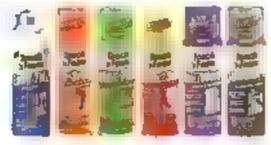

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Touch 'n Foam

Colorful holiday hearth

Cozy up a fireside seating area with seasonal trimmings and vintage-look accents from our Wayfair.com shop

BY GILLIAN BARTH · PHOTOGRAPHY · ORIN GREEN

NOTHING FEELS warmer than a conversation corner that hugs a woodburning hrep ace. With the holidays approaching, architectural designers Rick and Liz O'Leary turned their living room hearth into a cheery foca. point that welcomes guests. They had already updated the existing overmantel and built-in bookcase with new molding and panel deta ls to bring classic colonial-era charm to the 1840s farmhouse. A club chair with updated lines and a modern floral fabric anchors the space and mingles with vintage treasures to personalize the overal. look. A large silverware chest doubles as a coffee table, and silver trophy cups mix with other collectibles for a one-of-a-kind shelf display. An antique butter mirror above the mantel reflects the holiday mood and greenery.

Read on to learn how you can pull together a bright spot like this one that invites friends to sit and stay awhile.

mini wreaths
A trio of preserved boxwood rings hung with ribbon decorates a vintage looking glass. $60 for a set of three

throw pillow
A textured red pillow adds lumbar support and a pop of rich color. $52

get this look for less

orange print chair
This updated perch sets a warm tone, and the bird-and-bloom pattern will cheer all year. $419

weathered mirror
If a buffet mirror like the antique one at left proves hard to find, try using three square ones instead. This model's distressed wood frame gives it a timeworn look. $52

maple tray
Keep prep simple by welcoming guests with a holiday spread on a cutting board that lifts out for serving. $78

handsome log holder
A fireproof copper-plated container keeps wood tidy and reflects the fire s glow. $143

candleholders
Shapely candle bases in a distressed paint finish add interest to a shelf even when they re off duty. $62 for a set of three

trunk table
The homeowners' vintage chest was originally designed to hold silverware. This storage trunk's lid closes flat to hold drinks and tidbits; its roomy interior has ample stowaway space. $608

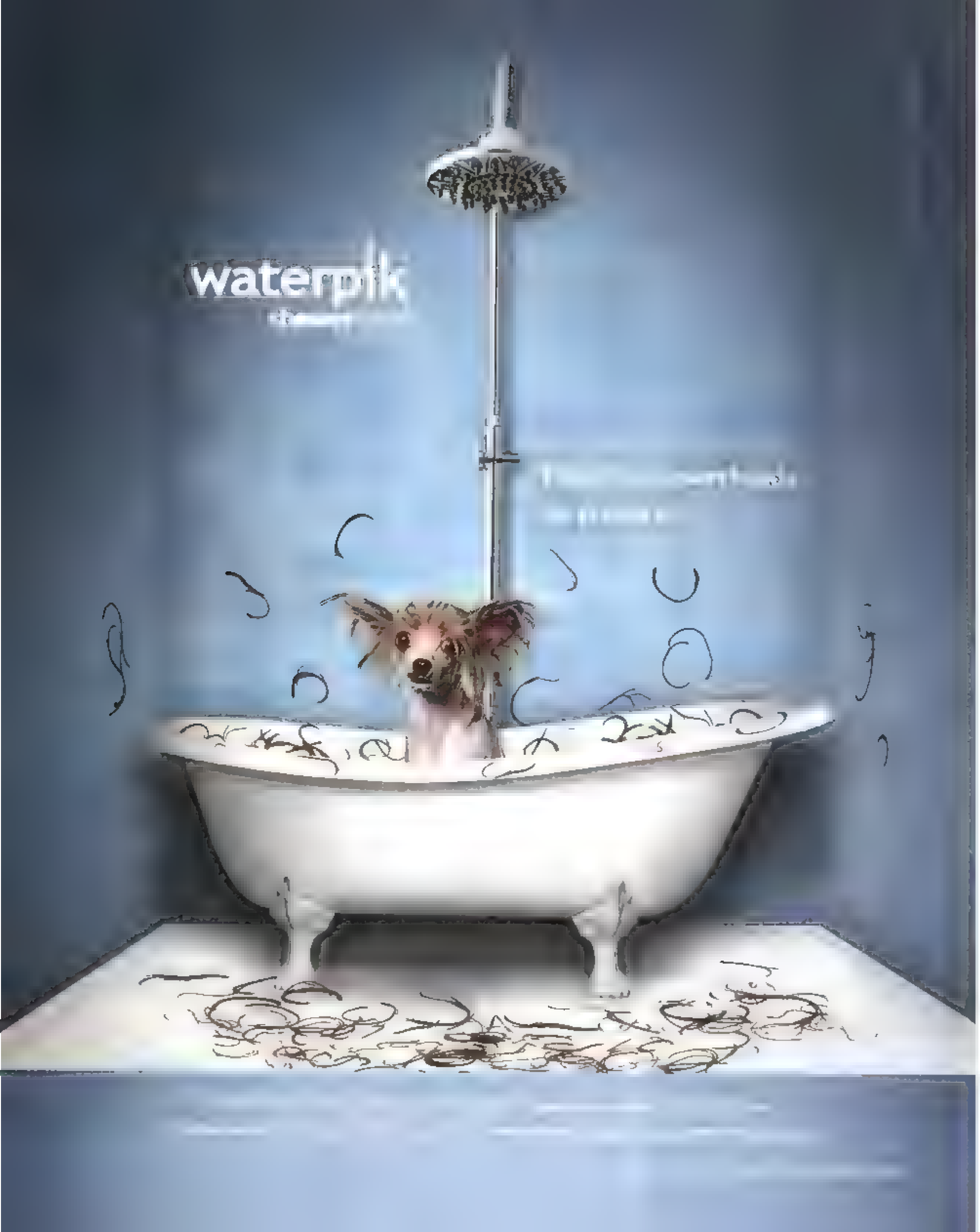
garland
DIY

Freshly cut greens arrayed on a mantel are a special seasonal treat. Braid your own with a foundation of magnolia leaves and cedar strung on green floral wire. For more color in the mix, incorporate globe thistle, cedar roses, dried pomegranates, or pinecones.

classic mantel
Frame a focal-point fire the way the O'Learys did with a traditional white-painted mantel. $398

SEE HOW IT'S DONE
To watch a video of how to make a garland, scan this page with the Blippar app using a smartphone or tablet, or go to thisoldhouse.com/novdec2013

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106



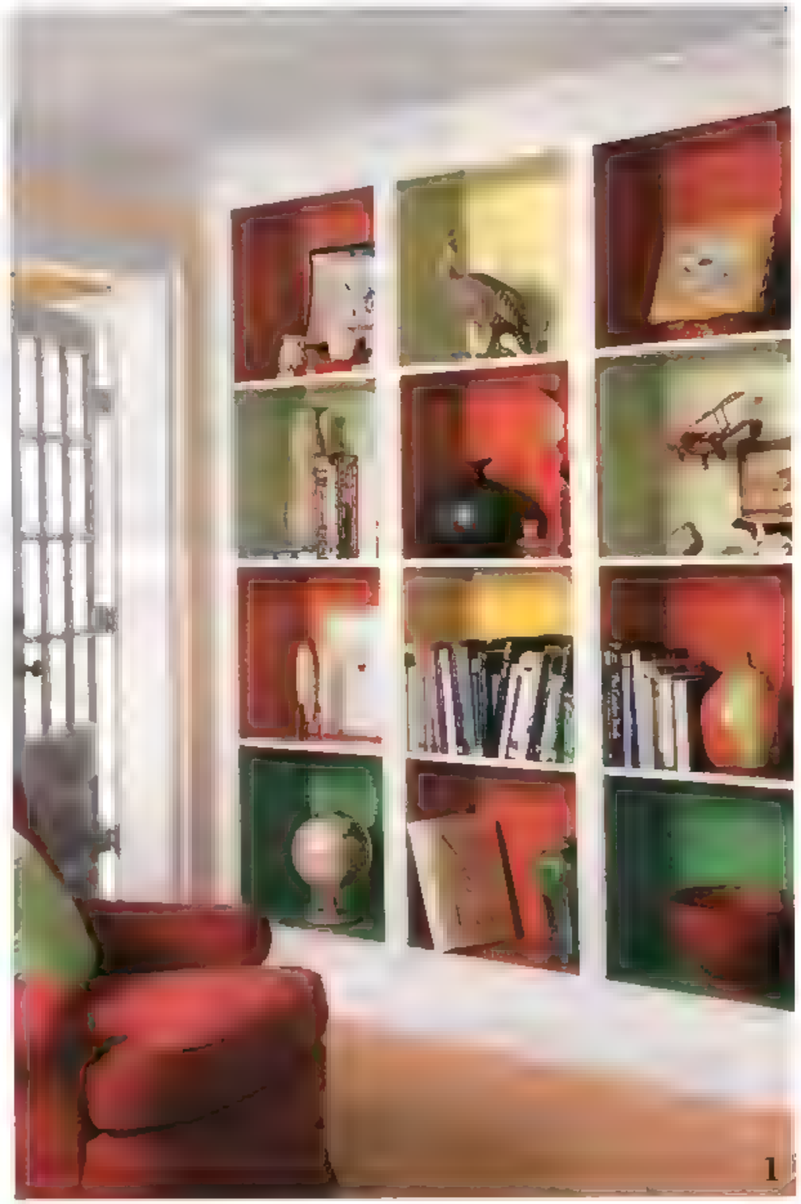
Inside job

Seven inspiring ways to capitalize on the blank canvas behind shelves

BY DEBORAH BALDWIN

BOOKCASES have been quietly blending in with the woodwork for far too long. Fortunately, after years of providing a muted backdrop for artfully arranged objects and book spines, these hardworking built-in and freestanding furniture pieces are no longer doomed to disappear under a coat of plain white. In fact, controlled blasts of color at the back, and maybe on the sides too, can be an ideal way to make collectibles and other display items come alive. Options range from intense jolts of color to soothing neutrals. The only rule is to keep the rest of the space in mind, whether the goal is to create an accent wall, tie together the furnishings, or provide a bit of needed contrast and energy.

Read on for ways to emphasize shelf assets while giving a room a fresh new look.



1 mix and match

A grid of uniform cubes becomes a playful display case with the help of outspoken colors in a five-way dialogue. Tangerine complements lime and partners with an equally warm yellow while two additional variations on green keep things lively. Painting the sides as well as the backs gives the grid extra dimension. Similar to shown: Behr's Sweet Mandarin (orange), Citron (acid green), Dried Palm (pale green), Chickadee (yellow), and Par Four Green (deep green).

2_ vibrant bands
Formerly white shelving is now an accent wall with an unexpected twist—easily done with paint samples in three hues of green. The color changes in a random fashion from shelf to shelf, inviting the eye to look up, down, and side to side. Similar to shown, on the right (top to bottom): Valspar's Lush Meadow, Lime Burst, and Jaunty Green.

3_ mood changer
A vintage-style hutch with glass doors and visible boards develops a little attitude when the back is an upbeat aqua blue. Similar to shown: Benjamin Moore's Tropicana Cabana.

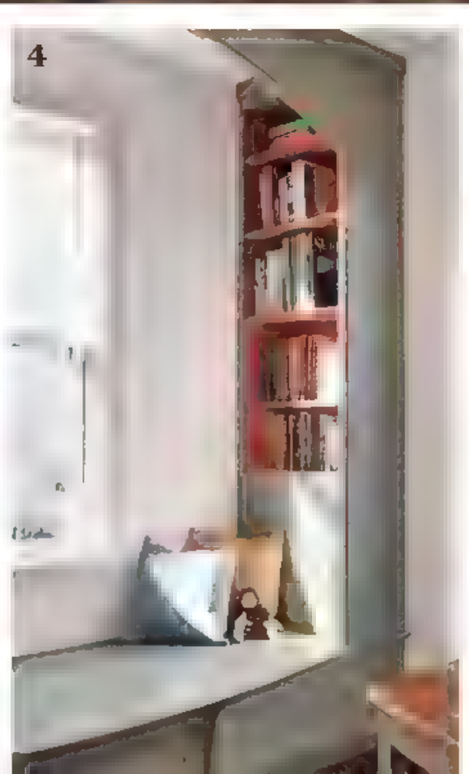
4_ knockout niche
Recessed bookcases come to the fore with a bright orangey red that saturates each shelf area from back to front. The contrast also enhances the built-in's otherwise gray-green surfaces. Similar to shown: Olympic's Light Sage (built-in) and Candy Corn (shelves).

2

5

6

3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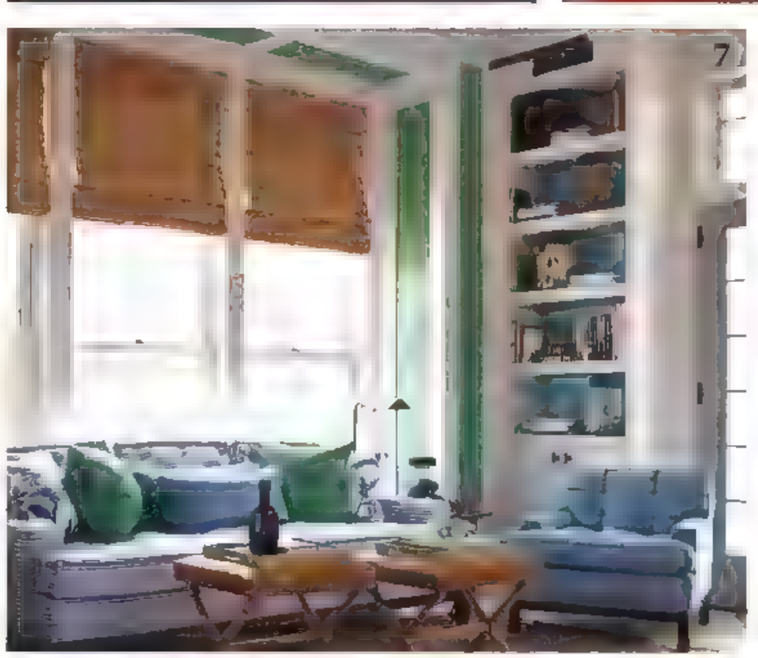
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5_ added depth
The dramatic deep red at the back of this built-in makes it and its pale serving pieces pop. Similar to shown: Glidden's Seal Grey (built-in) and Candy Apple (interior).

6_ polished presence
Salvaged barrister bookcases with curated contents shake their curio-shop style with a shot of clear blue that cools off the dark red floor and brick wall. Similar to shown: Benjamin Moore's Spectra Blue.

7_ natural match
Turquoise pulls together this crisp, sunny space, and using two dominant colors of equal intensity brings balance to the scheme. Framing them with white keeps the effect from being overpowering. Similar to shown: Sherwin-Williams's Straightforward Green and Fountain.

photoshop redo

Giving a plain box period charm

Craftsman-inspired upgrades, including a proper front porch, transform a dreary one-story into a cozy bungalow BY ANN E. STRATTON • ILLUSTRATION BY DRAWGATE INC.

"WE BOUGHT IT to fix up and flip," says Darla Palmer of her 1940s house, in Astoria, Oregon. But once she and her husband, Ric, started tearing into the place, they got too attached to it to sell. Giving the facade an Arts and Crafts look is the next big project on their list, so we asked architect Karl Anderson, in nearby Salem, to draft a design.

The flush eaves are one of the first things he'd change. "They're not practical in our rainy climate because they can let water drip behind the siding," says Anderson. He would extend the eaves 2 feet and support them with Craftsman style brackets, and also enlarge the entry porch, giving the entrance more weather protection and a roomier feel. Centering the windows boosts symmetry, while board-and-batten siding beneath the gable helps complete the bungalow look. Darla loves the proposed changes. "The style really fits our little neighborhood," she says. "It's just perfect."

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redo@thisoldhouse.com

↑ Triple windows with Craftsman styling are the right scale, negating the need for shutters.

finishing touches

Upgraded entryway details and a palette of earthy hues punch up the facade

window
Wood-frame three-over-one windows reinforce the Craftsman theme. Andersen; $600 each

paint
Contrasting shades of green and a pop of wine red accentuate the new architectural details. Behr; $33 per gallon

sconce
Seeded glass and a distressed-bronze finish give this lantern-style light a vintage look. Minka; $78

hardware
A rustic-bronze entry set with a single-cylinder dead bolt offers security with style. Weiser; $154

PHOTO (PAINT DABS): BRIAN HENN, THEINC. DIGITAL STUDIO

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

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In rare instances, men taking PDE5 inhibitors (oral erectile dysfunction medicines, including VIAGRA) reported a sudden decrease or loss of vision or hearing. If you experience sudden decrease or loss of vision or hearing, stop taking PDE5 inhibitors, including VIAGRA, and call a doctor right away.
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*Data taken from the Massachusetts Male Aging Study. Of 1,290 respondents, 52% stated that they had some degree of ED.
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VIAGRA® (vi-AG-rah)
(sildenafil citrate) tablets

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT VIAGRA

Never take VIAGRA if you take any medicines with nitrates. This includes nitroglycerin. Your blood pressure could drop quickly. It could fall to an unsafe or life-threatening level.

ABOUT ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION (ED)

Erectile dysfunction means a man cannot get or keep an erection. Health problems, injury, or side effects of drugs may cause ED. The cause may not be known.

ABOUT VIAGRA

VIAGRA is used to treat ED in men. When you want to have sex, VIAGRA can help you get and keep an erection when you are sexually excited. You cannot get an erection just by taking the pill. Only your doctor can prescribe VIAGRA.

VIAGRA does not cure ED.

VIAGRA does not protect you or your partner from STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) or HIV. You will need to use a condom.

VIAGRA is not a hormone or an aphrodisiac.

WHO IS VIAGRA FOR?

Who should take VIAGRA?

Men who have ED and whose heart is healthy enough for sex.

Who should NOT take VIAGRA?

- If you ever take medicines with nitrates.
  - Medicines that treat chest pain (angina), such as nitroglycerin or isosorbide mononitrate or dinitrate.
- If you use some street drugs, such as "poppers" (amyl nitrate or nitrite).
- If you are allergic to anything in the VIAGRA tablet.

BEFORE YOU START VIAGRA

Tell your doctor if you have or ever had:

- Heart attack, abnormal heartbeats, or stroke
- Heart problems such as heart failure, chest pain, angina, or aortic valve narrowing
- Low or high blood pressure
- Severe vision loss
- An eye condition called retinitis pigmentosa
- Kidney or liver problems
- Blood problems, such as sickle cell anemia or leukemia
- A deformed penis, Peyronie's disease, or an erection that lasted more than 4 hours
- Stomach ulcers or any kind of bleeding problems

Tell your doctor about all your medicines. Include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Tell your doctor if you take or use:

- Medicines called alpha-blockers to treat high blood pressure or prostate problems. Your blood pressure could suddenly get too low. You could get dizzy or faint. Your doctor may start you on a lower dose of VIAGRA.
- Medicines called protease inhibitors for HIV. Your doctor may prescribe a 25 mg dose. Your doctor may limit VIAGRA to 25 mg in a 48-hour period.
- Other methods to cause erections. These include pills, injections, implants, or pumps.
- A medicine called REVATIO. VIAGRA should not be used with REVATIO as REVATIO contains sildenafil, the same medicine found in VIAGRA.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIAGRA

Side effects are mostly mild to moderate. They usually go away after a few hours. Some of these are more likely to happen with higher doses.

The most common side effects are:

- Headache
- Feeling flushed
- Upset stomach

Less common side effects are:

- Trouble telling blue and green apart or seeing a blue tinge on things
- Eyes being more sensitive to light
- Blurred vision

Rarely, a small number of men taking VIAGRA have reported these serious events:

- Having an erection that lasts more than 4 hours. If the erection is not treated right away, long-term loss of potency could occur.
- Sudden decrease or loss of sight in one or both eyes. We do not know if these events are caused by VIAGRA and medicines like it or caused by other factors. They may be caused by conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes. If you have sudden vision changes, stop using VIAGRA and all medicines like it. Call your doctor right away.
- Sudden decrease or loss of hearing. We do not know if these events are caused by VIAGRA and medicines like it or caused by other factors. If you have sudden hearing changes, stop using VIAGRA and all medicines like it. Call your doctor right away.
- Heart attack, stroke, irregular heartbeats, and death. We do not know whether these events are caused by VIAGRA or caused by other factors. Most of these happened in men who already had heart problems.

If you have any of these problems, stop VIAGRA. Call your doctor right away.

HOW TO TAKE VIAGRA

Do:

- Take VIAGRA only the way your doctor tells you. VIAGRA comes in 25 mg, 50 mg, and 100 mg tablets. Your doctor will tell you how much to take.
- If you are over 65 or have serious liver or kidney problems, your doctor may start you at the lowest dose (25 mg).
- Take VIAGRA about 1 hour before you want to have sex. VIAGRA starts to work in about 30 minutes when you are sexually excited. VIAGRA lasts up to 4 hours.

Don't:

- Do not take VIAGRA more than once a day.
- Do not take more VIAGRA than your doctor tells you. If you think you need more VIAGRA, talk with your doctor.
- Do not start or stop any other medicines before checking with your doctor.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- This is only a summary of important information. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for complete product information OR
- Go to **www.viagra.com or call (888) 4-VIAGRA (484-2472).**

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Upholstered headboard

Build a headboard from fabric and plywood or buy one ready-made and turn in early

BY PAUL HOPE

A PLUSH headboard doesn't have to be a luxury reserved for fancy hotels. Hanging one in your bedroom adds an element of warmth without the cost that comes with buying an entire bed frame. And building a headboard yourself is easier than you might imagine. You'll use ¾-inch plywood as the backing and wrap it in 1-inch-thick foam padding to create soft, rounded edges before attaching the fabric. Then you'll finish it with nailhead trim sold in strips, saving you hours of tapping in individual nails around the perimeter. If you'd rather buy a headboard, expect to pay a premium for a tufted design or upscale fabrics. Whether you build or buy your new headboard, position it on the wall so that the bottom lands below the mattress, giving the impression that it extends all the way to the floor.

Similar to shown: Premier Prints Houndstooth Fabric, $7.48 per yard, fabric.com

Find out what tools and materials you'll need to build this project. Just use a tablet or smartphone to scan this page with the Bluppar app, or visit **thisoldhouse.com/novdec2013**

Choose thick batting and dense foam for a finely finished headboard

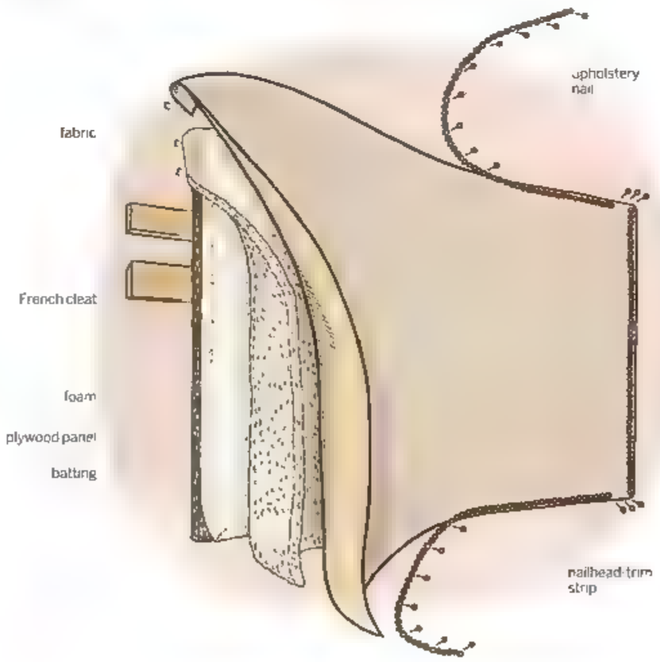
COST $84, not including fabric, which can vary widely in price
TIME 3 hours
DIFFICULTY Easy, but aligning the fabric pattern takes patience

Size the materials. Clamp a straightedge to the plywood, and use a circular saw to cut the panel. Lay the panel on the foam, and cut the foam to the size of the panel with a utility knife. If your fabric has a pattern, find its middle and align it with the center of the panel. Then measure and mark the fabric and batting 3 inches wider than the panel on all four sides so that they can wrap over the plywood edge. Use fabric shears to cut the material to size.

Upholster the headboard. Using fast-drying adhesive spray the panel, one side of the foam, and the edges of the foam. Stick the foam to the panel, except along the perimeter. Then fold the edges of the foam down to meet the plywood, creating a gentle curve. Wrap the panel in batting, and use a staple gun with ⅜-inch staples to fasten it to the back, always working from the center out. Lay your fabric facedown and center the panel on it, soft side down. Pull the excess fabric over the edge of one side and staple it onto the back. Pull the opposite side taut and staple it down. Staple the top and bottom, too.

Trim it. Cut the nailhead trim into four strips to line the perimeter. Use a small rubber mallet to nail the first strip down at a corner, and work out from that point; for any strip that doesn't end at an opening for a nail, cut the strip short and fill the gaps with individual nails.

Hang it. Using a circular saw with the blade set to 45 degrees, rip a 1×4 in half to make a French cleat. Use 1¼-inch wood screws to fasten the top of the cleat to the back of the headboard 6 inches from the top. Install the bottom half to the wall, mitered edge out, using 2½-inch wood screws, making sure to hit at least two studs. Hang the headboard and push your bed against it.



PHOTOS: OPPOSITE PAGE, EXCEPT AS FOLLOWS, COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER; THIS PAGE, JOHN NEMETH

BUY IT

Expect an upcharge for fancy fabrics and cushy padding

$240 **Upholstered**
Line up three square panels finished in linen, and the overall width fits perfectly with a queen-size bed. hsn.com

$306 **Upholstered**
This plush headboard features a thick layer of foam, and it's wrapped in soft, micro-suede fabric. wayfair.com

$449 **Upholstered**
This customizable option comes in 16 colors, or you can upgrade to a dozen-plus different fabrics. westelm.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

For entrepreneurs, the goal isn't merely to expand—it's to seek out new business that's truly worth your time

By **ELAINE POFELDT**
Illustrations by **OLIVER MUNDAY**

Not all small-business owners intend to stay small forever, but few take the time to map out how they plan to grow. A recent survey by the National Small Business Association found that most don't have a new ad or marketing campaign in the works, and one in five has absolutely no growth strategy in place for the coming year.

Instead, many entrepreneurs move toward new opportunities like a plant seeking sunshine, going where the light is most easily found. Some never slow down to consider whether those jobs are profitable, rewarding, or ultimately efficient uses of their time.

The key is not always to think big at the start—it's to focus. Over the next three pages, you'll learn how to hone your strategy, cultivate the growth you want, and pay for your build-out safely and wisely.

Focus
YOUR STRATEGY
EVEN IF IT MEANS TURNING AWAY BUSINESS

TO CREATE a business capable of blossoming for years, you'll have to prune it from time to time. Working with customers or offering products that can't achieve healthy profit margins can sap time and stifle growth, says Nat Wasserstein, managing director of Lindenwood Associates, which helps turn around small and midsize businesses. So thin out ventures and customers that bleed your energy.

1 Figure out which services are worth it

Giving clients what they want is important, but it should never be your only criterion for the products or services that you provide.

When architect Bruce Wentworth considered expanding his 12-person company—Wentworth Inc., in Chevy Chase, Md.—he thought about what his firm excelled at: combining transitional-style interior design, which blends modern and traditional finishes, with detail-oriented construction. And he discovered there isn't enough profit in projects below $50,000. "By the time we get involved in design, construction drawings, pricing, and permits, it's not the most efficient use of time," he says. The firm's sweet spot is in the mid- to high-end market: kitchen remodeling, for instance, ranging from $70,000 to more than $300,000.

2 Rank your customers by their "value"

Pay attention to the quality of your clients: Are they high or low profit? Are they high or low maintenance? "You want to retain those customers who represent your highest profit margin," says Yoon Cannon, founder of Paramount Business Coach, a small-business consulting firm in Pennsylvania. Even better: Find ways to cultivate more business from those clients.

Start by calculating the "value" of each customer, according to what they bring in annual profits, revenue, and effort. To do that, use the worksheet below. Then rank them, and focus like a laser on the top 20%.

3 Prioritize potential clients too

In 2008, Harry and Barb Haagen, who run a house-painting company with six employees, began to worry when sales dipped by more than 10% in the economic downturn.

The couple, from Doylestown, Pa., came up with a counterintuitive fix. They looked for ways that they could winnow the business even more. Harry recognized that his strength was in craftsmanship, not low-cost jobs. So Barb, who handles the phones, began screening callers. To those interested only in price, she explained the added value Harry provides. If that didn't hook them, she moved on, freeing up time to focus on customers willing to pay for premium services. The strategy has paid off: Sales are up 15% this year.

TARGET THE RIGHT CUSTOMERS

To determine which clients are most valuable, score them not just on profits but also on profits per effort, says business coach Yoon Cannon. Use this worksheet to calculate each customer's value score, then rank them, with the highest being the best.

VALUE SCORE

Total revenue from all jobs in past year from Client X	
Cost of acquiring client	
Total job costs	
Profit from Client X	
Total hours worked	
Profit per hour	
Relationship bonus	
Value	$66

Tally up all the marketing costs: direct mail, presentations—even wining and dining.

Include only materials, mileage, shipping, and labor (including your own, directly tied to that project).

Aggravation counts, but so does frequency of work, length of relationship, and number of referrals they bring. Score clients on 1–10 scale, with 10 being best.

Turn the bonus into a percentage and multiply by profit/hour (this example is based on a 10 score).

Attract THE GROWTH YOU SEEK

USE THE RIGHT ONLINE STRATEGIES TO TARGET CUSTOMERS

DIGITAL marketing can be a cost-effective way to stand out. Yet a recent survey found that few small-business owners think that using social media (11%) or search engine optimization (6%) is that useful. Don't let such opportunities go to waste.

FOLLOW THIS CHECKLIST:

☐ Choose the right platform

Everyone uses Google AdWords to advertise online, but that can be pricey. The average cost per click in the business category was recently $1.98, according to a study by Adgooroo. For a cheaper alternative (91¢), try the Yahoo Bing Network.

It's no bit player. Yahoo Bing accounts for nearly a third of all online search in the U.S. And while Google generally delivers more ad impressions, Adgooroo found that the lead is not that great in four of six major categories: business, computers, education, and travel. In finance Yahoo Bing actually leads. Yet costs per click were 23% to 63% cheaper. For B2B firms, LinkedIn is another cost-effective ad platform.

☐ Select the right words

Seeking to grab customers using search engines to find businesses like yours? Incorporate strategically throughout your site the words customers are apt to look up, says Heather Lutze, CEO of Findability Consulting & Speaking, in Denver.

Gavin Semrow, owner of stucco-remediation firm Ai Restoration, in New Hope, Pa., uses terms based on services clients seek, such as "stucco coating," "stucco painting," and "stucco repair." One recent post on his company blog was called "Eastern PA: Stucco Failure Capital of USA."

☐ Pick the right crowd

Social media is all about finding the right fit. Offer visually oriented services or products? Then Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest are good places to hang out, says Evan Bailyn, author of *Outsmarting Social Media*. Interested in B2B? Then use LinkedIn and SlideShare.net, which let you introduce yourself to clients through posted research and presentations.

☐ Stand out visually

Use some of your Facebook budget to create videos, says Ben Landers, CEO of digital-marketing firm Blue Corona. Research by the social media firm Zuum found that videos were shared 11% of the time, versus less than 3% for status updates and under 7% for photos.

☐ Track your results

More than half of all small-business owners fail to measure the results of their marketing efforts. So they don't see what's working and what's not.

Yet for just $200, Landers notes, you can hire a developer to customize the free Google Analytics program for you to identify the precise channel through which each visitor came to your website.

Finance YOUR GROWTH WISELY

BE RELENTLESS WHEN IT COMES TO PRESERVING YOUR CASH

IF YOU GROW FASTER than planned, even a momentary cash crunch can have a lasting effect. "Not stocking enough cash is probably why the majority of firms go out of business," says Bill Klein, president of Consero Global, a financial consulting and outsourcing firm that works with small and midsize companies.

To avoid a cash crunch, take a page from SpareFoot, an online search firm based in Austin that is trying to become the Hotels.com for self-storage space.

Monitor your cash flow maniacally

Part of making your firm attractive to a lender down the road is ensuring that there aren't wide gaps between money flowing in and out. At SpareFoot, owners check their cash flow statement every day.

Then they do something rather unique: They let every one of the company's 88 employees look at those financial reports too, says CFO Lucas Walters. That way, when it comes to spending decisions, "everyone on the team is rowing in the same direction"—and focused on savings, he says.

John Egan, editor-in-chief of SpareFoot's website, agrees. "Because we know the financial situation and feel like we have a stake in it, we are careful with how we spend our money," he explains. "If I have to book a plane ticket, I'll look for the best deal. Why wouldn't I?"

Keep staffing costs as low as possible

Since labor is one of your biggest expenses, maintaining tight cost controls over your payroll will go a long way toward protecting your cash. Sure, you can always hire full-time staffers now and lay them off down the road should business slow. But that approach can get expensive, says Jaime Klein, president of Inspire Human Resources.

SpareFoot's owners avoided this by relying when they could on temporary workers and by outsourcing early on. When the company did need to add permanent employees, it tried them out for 90 days—without benefits—before committing.

Today, as SpareFoot plans to increase its workforce to 96 by year-end, "we still evaluate every position to determine what solution makes sense, including outsourcing," says Walters, who himself started out as an outsourced CFO for the firm before joining permanently later on.

Line up financing before you expand

The time to position yourself for a low-interest bank loan isn't when you're running out of money and struggling, says Consero Global's Bill Klein. Obtaining credit is a lot like landing new customers. You have to invest time and effort to build a real relationship with potential lenders—and you have to cast a wide net.

SpareFoot's owners did just that. They kept deposits in several local banks for years knowing that they'd eventually need financing for expansion. That day came in 2012, when the firm required a seven-figure loan to pay for two acquisitions (one of which it did not complete). By maintaining relationships with lenders for years, says Walters, "we got the loan on more favorable terms than we could have otherwise."

MEET THE REAL JACK KENNEDY

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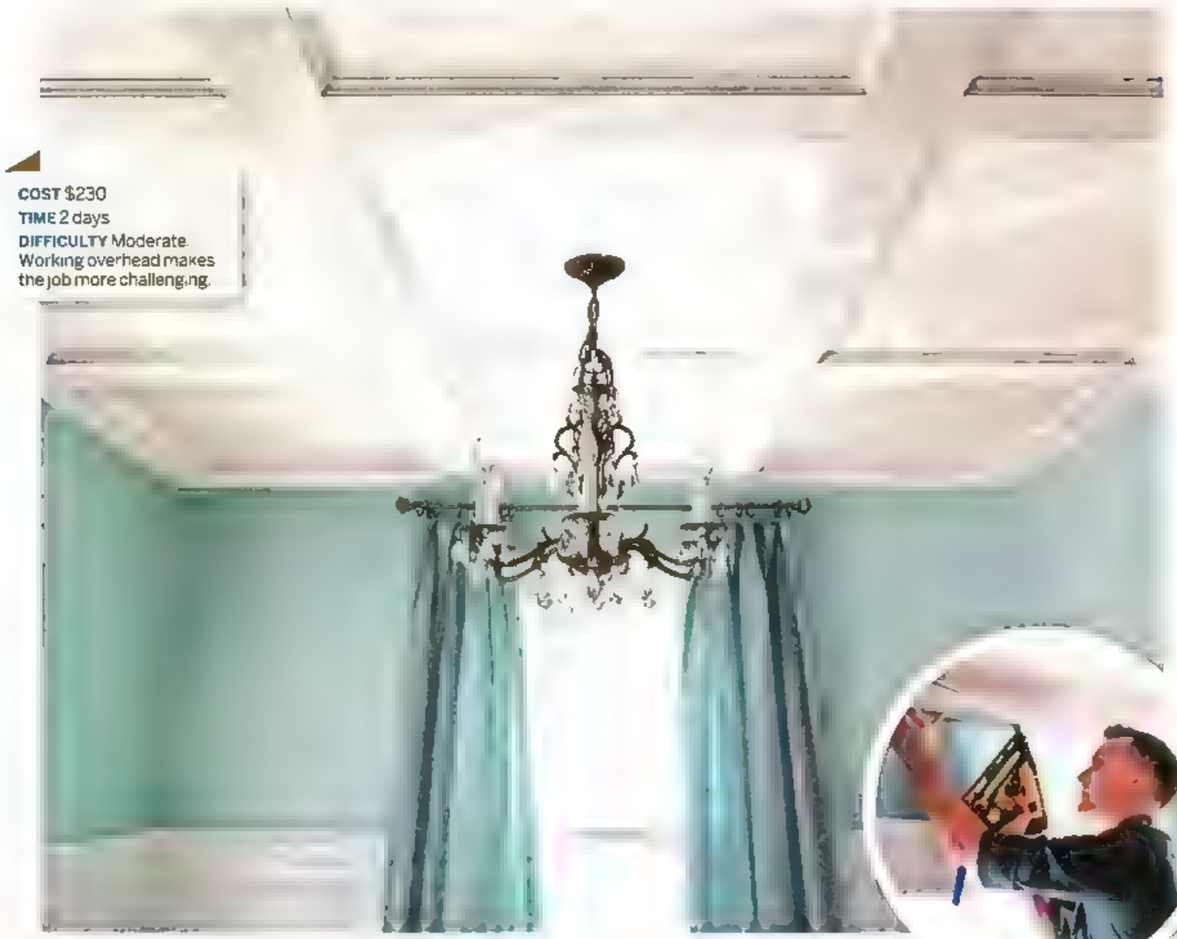
Install a simple coffered ceiling

Apply basic carpentry techniques to primed boards and molding to add a formal, elegant touch to any room BY JOHN CASEY • PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN BENYI



COST $230
TIME 2 days
DIFFICULTY Moderate. Working overhead makes the job more challenging.

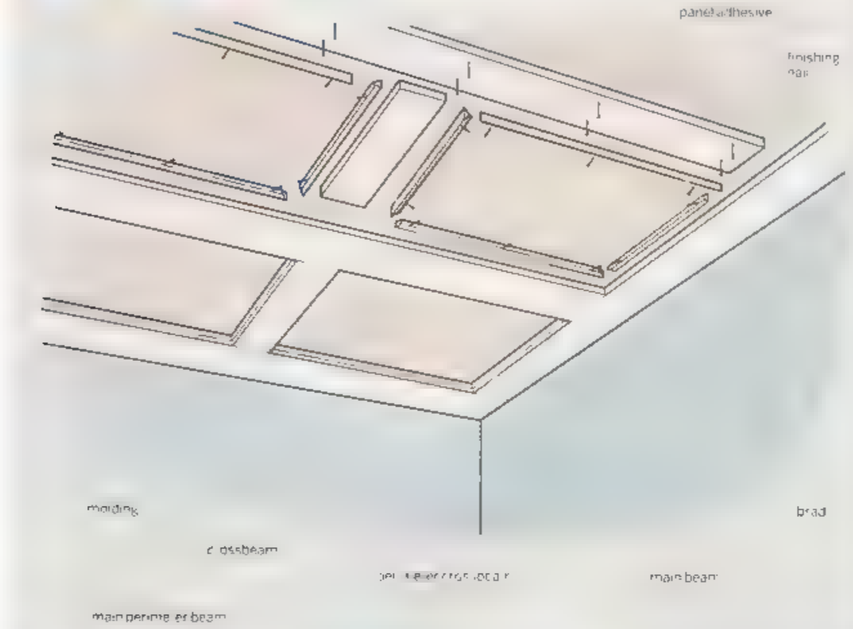
IF YOU'D LIKE to add dimension and character to a plain room, nothing beats the traditional look of a coffered ceiling, with its grid of bold beams. Constructing coffers on your own may seem daunting, but we'll show you how even the average DIYer can create this hallmark old-house feature. The secret is our low-profile coffer design, which greatly simplifies the task of working overhead because you're installing flat boards and molding rather than assembling box beams.

See for yourself in the following pages as *This Old House* contributor Chris Beidel, owner of Pernt, a handmade-furniture company in Brooklyn, New York, walks you through the steps of this ceiling beautification project.

Primed lumber: WindsorONE+1×6 finger-jointed pine, $1.35 per linear foot; windsorone.com

DAY-TO-DAY TIMELINE

SATURDAY Install the beams (Steps 1–5)
SUNDAY Install molding and paint (Steps 6–8)

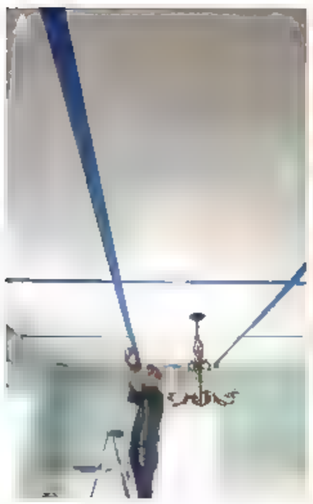


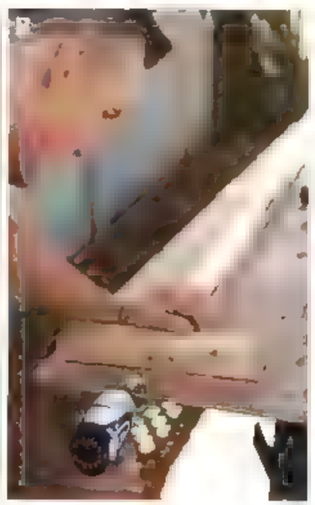
TOOLS

measuring tape
painter's tape
stud finder
⅛-inch drill bit
drill/driver
miter saw
pneumatic nailers
(18-gauge, 2-inch)
chalk line with nonstaining chalk
rafter square
putty knife
caulk gun
2½-inch sash brush
small paint roller

MATERIALS

1×6 primed finger-jointed pine (see Architect's Notes)
cove-profile shoe molding
panel adhesive
2-inch 16-gauge pneumatic nails
1-inch 18-gauge pneumatic brads
wood shims
wood glue
wood putty
latex caulk
semigloss paint





1 LAY OUT THE GRID

A] **Locate the joists.** Work out your design on graph paper, mapping lights and major features of the room. We centered our nine-coffer grid around an existing chandelier. Measure and mark where your "beams" will meet the walls, and use painter's tape to simulate them, to see how the pattern fits the room. Use a stud finder to locate the ceiling joists. Mark both ends of each joist where it meets the sidewalls. Put a ⅛-inch drill bit in your drill/driver and make test holes near the walls—they'll be covered by the beams—to verify joist locations and make sure you catch the centers.

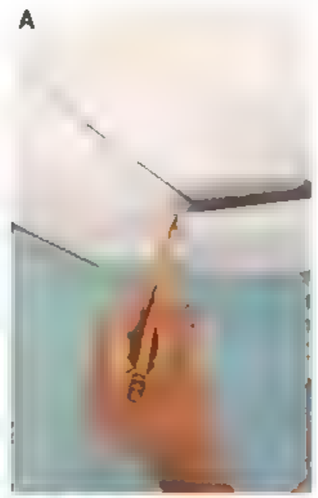
B] **Make a deadman.** Use scrap lumber and your drill/driver to make a T-shaped deadman, as shown. ¾ inch shorter than the height of your ceiling. It will hold one end of the beam against the ceiling as you work.

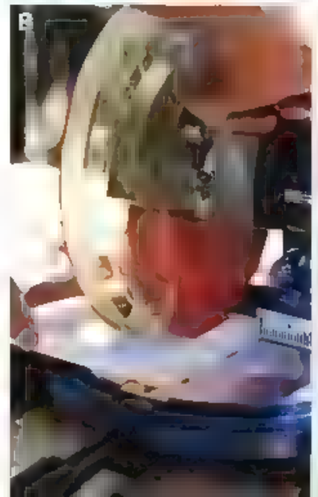
ILLUSTRATION: JEREMY NEMET

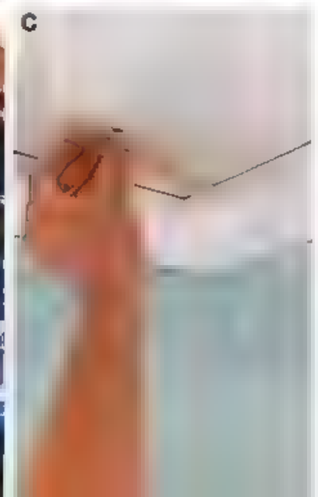
2 INSTALL PERIMETER BEAMS

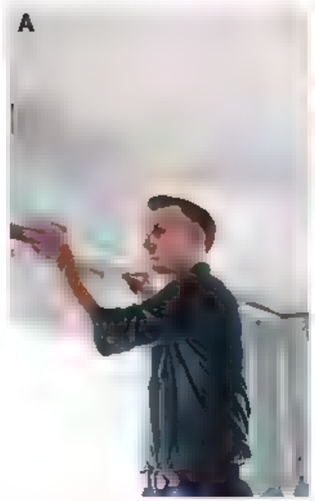
A] **Cut a beam.** Measure for the first main perimeter beam. If your room is square or irregular, start with a perimeter beam that runs perpendicular to the joists, to create a firm connection to the ceiling. (If you need two boards to span the length of your room, join them with a plain scarf joint at a joist.) Cut the beam on your miter saw ¼ inch too long. Dry fit the piece, then apply panel adhesive to the length of the beam. Butt one end into the corner and hold it there with your deadman, as shown.

B] **Nail the beam in place.** Tuck the other end into the opposite corner, creating a bow. Begin at one end and work across, firing two 16-gauge pneumatic nails into each joist with your pneumatic nailer. Voids will be covered with molding and caulk. Measure and cut the opposite perimeter beam, and repeat the installation process.









TIP The beams need to be tight to the ceiling at the joists, but any gaps that appear between joists will be covered later by the molding

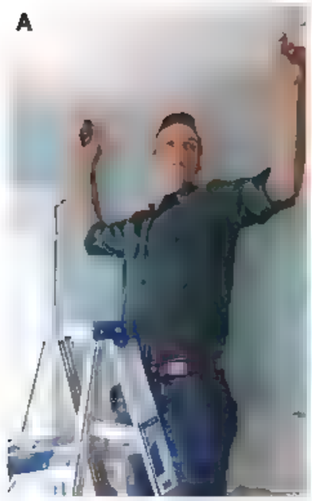
3 COMPLETE THE PERIMETER

A] **Scribe the perimeter crossbeams.** Measure between the main perimeter beams at each end of the room. On a miter saw, cut two 1×6s 3 inches too long. Using the deadman, hold a rough-cut board overlapping the main beams at each end, and mark where it crosses a beam at one end, as shown. To mark its back edge, lay the board face to the wall. Use a straightedge to connect the front and back marks, creating a scribe line. Scribe one end of the other beam, too.

B] **Cut along the scribe.** At the miter saw, adjust the blade to match the angle of the scribe line, and make the cut. Repeat for the other beam. Now scribe and cut the opposite end of each beam, leaving them ⅛ inch too long, for a tight fit.

C] **Shim the seam.** Apply adhesive to a perimeter crossbeam and hold one end in place with your deadman. Fit the other end in place. If the joint is not flat, use shims to bring the surfaces of the two beams flush, as shown. Use the nailer to fire two nails at opposite angles every 12 inches along the perimeter crossbeam. Remove excess shim by scoring it with a utility knife and snapping it off.

SEE HOW IT'S DONE
To watch a video of this project, use a tablet or smartphone to scan this page with the Bparapp, or go to **thisoldhouse.com/novdec2013**



4 INSTALL THE MAIN BEAMS

A] **Snap a chalk line.** With the perimeter installed you can measure and mark locations for the main beams and crossbeams. Use your marks to snap a line with nonstaining chalk to mark one edge of each beam, as shown; then snap lines over each joist.

B] **Cut the main beams.** Scribe and cut the main beams the same way you did for the perimeter crossbeams in Steps 3A and 3B. Then apply adhesive to a beam and pressure-fit it in place, using your deadman to hold one end. Use shims to make the joints flush as needed, nailing through them and into the ceiling at every joist. Install the other main beam the same way.

5 INSTALL THE CROSSBEAMS

A] **Cut the crossbeams.** Cut the board for the first crossbeam 1 to 2 inches too long for the space between two main beams. Then use the scribing technique from Step 3A to cut first one end and then the other, to create a tight fit. Dry-fit the piece in place, as shown. If sized correctly, the crossbeam should fit snugly in place.

B] **Mark joint locations on the crossbeams.** Use a rafter square to confirm that the joint at each end is at a 90-degree angle, and mark where both edges of the crossbeam meet the main beams.

C] **Toenail the joints.** Pop the piece out, apply adhesive to it, and set it back. Shoot a nail through each corner of the crossbeam into the ceiling. Then, with your nail gun held at about a 45-degree angle to the joint, toenail through the corner of the crossbeam and into the main beam. Toenail the other corners of the crossbeam, too. This will help hold the joints together as the wood expands and contracts with the seasons.

I JUST PUT UP
NEW WALLS

Some of the ugliest walls imaginable can be given a new lease on life with a little prep and a fresh coat of KILZ® primer. By blocking stains and unwanted colors, KILZ primer lays the foundation for a successful room transformation. It's like a fresh start for your walls.

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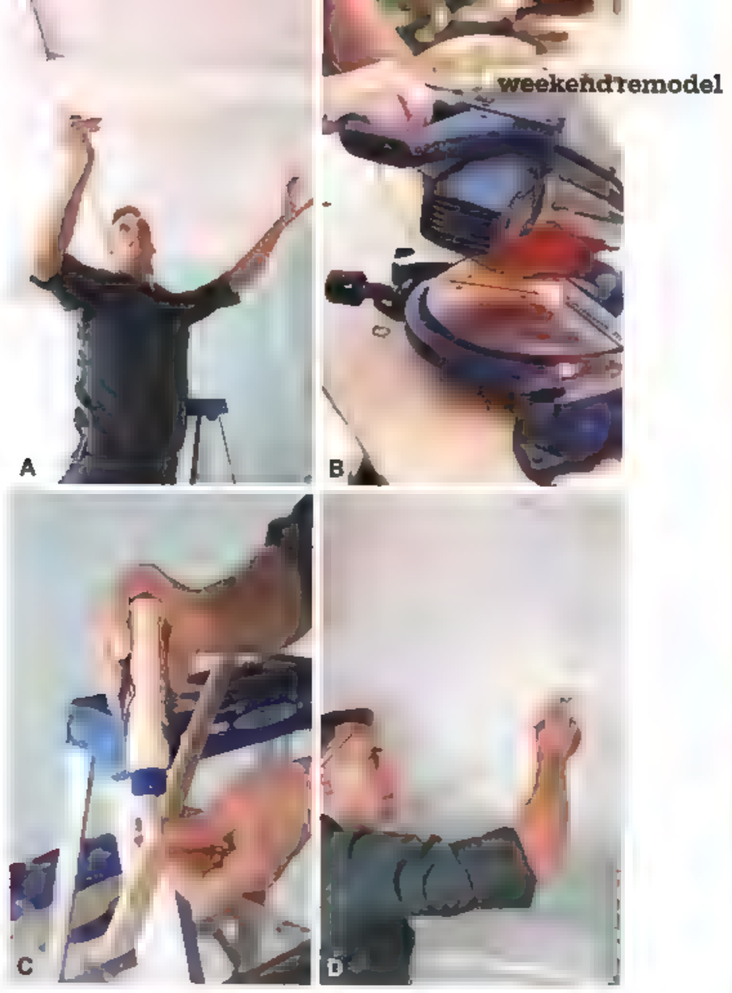

6 TRIM AND FINISH

A **Scribe the molding.** Measure the interior dimensions of all four sides of the first coffer. On your miter saw, cut inside 45-degree angles on each end of your molding, leaving each piece about ¼ inch too long. Then scribe each piece by holding it in place, as shown, and marking the overhanging material.

B **Finish-cut the molding.** Trim the excess on your miter saw, as shown. Then dry-fit the piece in the coffer. Repeat the process until all the pieces fit snugly in place.

C **Glue and nail the molding.** Apply wood glue to each piece of molding. (Panel adhesive is thicker than wood glue and could cause the molding to stand off the beams.) If you have gaps between the ceiling and the beam, split the difference when you set the molding in place to hide any variation across the coffer. Use an 18-gauge brad or pin nailer to nail the molding in place. Repeat the process on all the coffers. Apply latex caulk as needed to finish the joints and cover any gaps.

D **Prep and paint.** Apply wood putty with a putty knife to the nail holes. Sand the putty smooth. Use a 2½-inch sash brush and semigloss paint to finish the molding. Then use a small paint roller to finish the beams. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

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LOCK

LIGHT

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THE TOH TOP 100 BEST NEW HOME PRODUCTS 2013

ICON KEY

- money-saver
- easy upgrade
- perfect solution
- eco-friendly
- splurge
- made in the USA

People always ask, What makes a TOH Top 100 product? Tough question. The truth is, there's no single answer that covers everything in the following pages. Many items on our list impressed us for their ingenuity, like the kitchen knife that won't dull (page 69). A good number are terrifically original, like the handmade tile you customize online (page 80). We always look for breakthroughs, of course, like the most efficient water heater (page 74). Other honorees surprised us by how well they work, like the Paint Handy (page 72). Some products are just too cool to pass up, like the fridge that dispenses sparkling water (page 68). In the end, our decision making comes down to another question altogether: Is it useful, and is it relevant for our readers? Now it's your turn to be the judge.

KITCHEN

Chop-chop

PRO LINE SERIES 16-CUP FOOD PROCESSOR, BY KITCHENAID

$

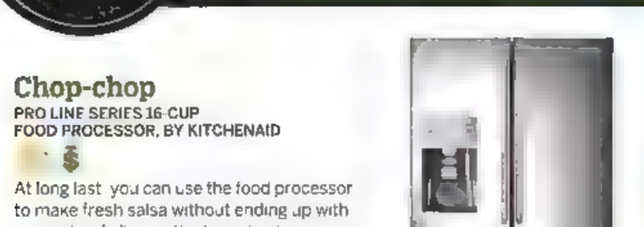
At long last, you can use the food processor to make fresh salsa without ending up with gazpacho. A dicing attachment cuts veggies into strips that are then fed through a slicing disk and deposited in perfect little cubes—an industry first in a noncommercial model. Don't worry: For thin spirce, it also slices and shreds like a champ and can knead dough. $599; kitchenaid.com

Still or sparkling?

FOUR-DOOR REFRIGERATOR WITH AUTOMATIC SPARKLING WATER DISPENSER, BY SAMSUNG

$

This dreamy four-door fridge is the first to offer carbonated water, compliments of a built-in SodaStream dispenser. Yes, please. $3,899; samsung.com



Goof-proof grouting

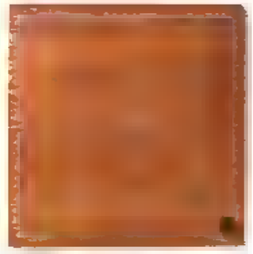
MAGNA TILE LUXURY SERIES, BY TILE OF SPAIN

We can all applaud a DIY-friendly design that calls for less grout work and leaves less room for error. The smaller bricks on these puzzle-piece ceramic tiles effectively lay themselves, and when you're done, the grout lines disappear into the pattern. $3.60 per square foot; magnaceram-ca.com

Classic canning

HERITAGE COLLECTION PINT JAR, BY BALL

Just in time for the 100th anniversary of Ball's Perfect Mason Jar, these blue-tinted pints pay homage to the originals, which were made of glass with impurities that often cast a bluish hue. $13 for a pack of six; freshpreservingstore.com



Fresh faces

CUSTOMIZED IKEA CABINET FRONTS, BY SEMIHANDMADE

If you're thinking about tearing out some IKEA cabinets for a kitchen reno, think twice. These made-to-order doors, panels, and drawer fronts fit perfectly over existing IKEA boxes. The 10 beautiful wood veneer finishes range from simple oak to exotic zebrawood and cost about a third less than new plywood cabinets with veneered doors. From about $4,160 for a 16-foot run of cabinets; semihandmadedoors.com

Speedy dishwasher

800 PLUS SERIES DISHWASHER SHX7PT55UC, BY BOSCH

We're all for a shorter dishwashing cycle, but not at the expense of cleaning performance. The SpeedPerfect mode here boosts the water temperature and spins the spray arm faster to leave plates and glasses sparkling while shaving about 30 minutes off a standard cycle. $1,299; bosch-home.com

Advanced streaming

ZOE SINGLE-LEVER KITCHEN FAUCET, BY KWC AMERICA

$

The seamless arching lines of this single-lever Swiss-made sink buddy elevate the cleanup zone, and the LED light that rings the pull-out-spray spout means you'll never again miss the scudge hiding at the bottom of the stockpot. $1,800; kwc-us.com

Sharp. Very sharp

8-INCH CHEF'S KNIFE, BY VMATTER

$

Even the best steel knives lose their sharp edge over time. Why not lose the steel instead? Injection-molded from a nonferrous, noncrystalline metal alloy, the blade on this knife is stronger than steel but won't dull. If it does, send it back for a free sharpening. $247; vmatter.com

Racket reducer

IQ BLOWER SYSTEM WITH PK22 RANGE HOOD, BY BEST

Designed to be built into cabinets, this high-end, low-profile range hood efficiently moves up to 1,100 cubic feet of air per minute at the highest of its four settings. What wooed us is that the sweet spot—600 cfm—purrs at a tolerable 7 sones. From $1,389 (not including the custom millwork shown); bestrangehoods.com

Easy breezy flooring

FIBERFLOOR, BY TARKETT

Unroll this soft, phthalate-free multilayered vinyl sheet and simply cut it to fit. A layer of engineered fiberglass helps the material lie flat, making glue optional. Or you can pin it down with shoe molding. You'll breathe easy knowing that the foam layer is mold and mildew resistant. From $1 per square foot; tarkett.com

APPS

Dirty Kitchen Cooking Timer

ANDROID AND iOS

Drag cartoonish pots in place to simmer on a virtual stove to keep tabs on multiple cooking times. From $1.99.

Fridge Pal

iOS

Scan bar codes of the inventory in your fridge, freezer, and pantry, then share it with your family members so that you don't end up with 11 boxes of Froot Loops. $2.99

Life after stainless

ARTISTRY SERIES APPLIANCES, BY GE

This line of starter appliances achieves the unthinkable: It makes black and white cool again. High-gloss finishes, instead of tired stainless steel, and Americana design touches, such as metallic trim and analog clocks, exude a cohesive, polished look at a price that'll leave you with enough cash to redo the cabinets, too. $2,416 for the fridge, dishwasher, microwave, and range; geappliances.com

Don't get burned

EASY-REACH FOUR-SLICE TOASTER OVEN, BY HAMILTON BEACH

Here's a rad cat: idea a toaster oven that doesn't singe your knuckles every time you use it. Like a rolltop desk, the curved glass door slides up, slipping behind the recessed heating element and leaving plenty of clearance to reach in and grab your finished food: no tongs (or burn cream) necessary. $50; hamiltonbeach.com

PHOTOS: TILES, CABINET FRONT, CANNING JARS, FLOORING: TED MORRISON

LOCK WITH FORGED ALLOY STEEL PARALLEL JAWS THAT LOCK IN PLACE FOR A FIRM GRIP, KOBALT MAGNUM GRIP LOCKING PLIERS ARE BUILT FOR POWER.

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Next Generation of Tough Tools.
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Available only at LOWE'S

BATH

Matched set

EMERALD COLLECTION, BY APAISER

$

We believe it's hard to improve the lines of the classic pedestal tub, but the soaker in this collection rises to the challenge: It somehow manages to look both novel and traditional, and the updated curves scale down wonderfully to the vessel sink. From $542 (sink) and $4,820 (tub). apaiser.com

Straight flush

WELLWORTH DUAL-FLUSH TOILET, BY KOHLER

Which button's which, again? Never mind. We found our answer mounted on the side of the tank of this water-saving toilet: mercifully intuitive nested levers that let you flush either 1.1 or 1.6 gallons of water, as the situation requires. Bonus: The top of your tank remains free to host your shelf collection. $314. kohler.com

Wood-look wonder

PORCELAIN FLOOR TILE, BY STYLESELECTIONS

High-definition inkjet printing meets porcelain in 6- by 24-inch faux wood planks at a bargain like we've never seen. Warm up a bath with any of seven styles, including (from top) Walnut, Metro Wood White, and Natural Timber. From $2.48 per square foot. lowes.com

Unabashed brass

DANIELLA IN NATURAL BRASS, BY WATERMARK

Finishes come and go, but this one was gone for so long that we're qualifying it as totally new. Brass faucets with no protective coating age unevenly, like some relic from a Parisian flea market—without the funky plumbing fittings. We'll never tell where you got it. $588. watermarkdesigns.com

Cut elbow grease

REVEAL POWER SCRUBBER, BY RUBBERMAID

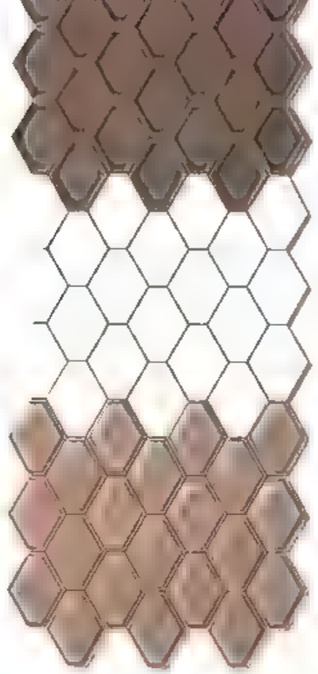
If you've ever had the urge to go at your tile with your electric toothbrush, you were on to something. Swap out the regular brush (shown) for a pointy one to get into tight corners and grout lines. (Avoid high-pH cleansers, which can damage grout, in favor of a less acidic product, such as Bon Ami.) $21. rubbermaid.com

Cage-rattler

EDISON CAGED SCONCE IN GUNMETAL, BY RESTORATION HARDWARE

$

We did a double take at this fetching replica of early-20th-century gas lamps. A hand-distressed finish softens the industrial look, an included bulb mimics the flame, and a slim profile keeps the damp-rated fixture from overpowering even the smallest of baths. $169. rh.com



Stretched hex

ATOM WALL TILE, BY NEMO

$

Sometimes, simplicity wins out. Three versions—concave, convex, and flat—and three smoky shades plus plain white invite creative mixing or matching. For those bored by traditional white hexes, here's a chance to go a little crazy, well within the bounds of taste. $15 per square foot. nemotile.com

Puzzle-solving vanity set

NORBURY COLLECTION, BY ALLEN + ROTH

A connecting cabinet lets you pair vanities in three sizes to create any number of configurations, meaning maybe you can squeeze double sinks into a funky floor plan after all. Dovetail joinery and a glossy finish on all four sides of each piece evoke a built-in look without the custom price tag. From $149. lowes.com

Time for a grout-lift

KWIK SEAL GROUT RECOLOR KIT, BY DAP

Here, for the first time in one package, is the three-step cure for icky grout. (1) Strip away the stained top layer of scum and sealant, opening the pores to create a firm grip. (2) Recolor and seal in shiny white or almond. (3) Buff with a chamois. $29.99. dap.com

Graceful grab bar

INVISIA SOAP DISH, BY AMERICAN STANDARD

We found more to this fixture than a soap dish that drains well. Anchored at three points, the stainless-steel ring offers a sturdy hand when you need it most, minus the hospital look. $325. americanstandard.com

Svelte sink material

SAPHIRKERAMIK, BY LAUFEN

$

And you thought fireclay was tough. By adding the mineral corundum to ceramic, Swiss inventors created a new material that's as hard as carbon steel and as white as white can be. The resulting strength means the stuff can, for instance, be formed into sinks with edges just 2 millimeters thick. $495 (as shown). laufen.com

Clever cover-up

UNIVERSAL NUFIT TUB CLOSURE, BY WATCO MANUFACTURING

Farewell to ye olde rubber stopper. Here's a nifty upgrade in the form of a push-pull tub plug that also covers a corroded strainer body flange. $39 in brushed nickel (shown). watcomfg.com

APPS

Pipe Fitter Tools

ANDROID AND iOS

Armchair plumbers, rejoice. This info-packed app for fitting and fabricating pipes helps calculate pipe length, angles, and offsets for big plumbing projects. 99 cents.

Soap.com

ANDROID AND iOS

Scan the bar codes of your bathroom expendables with your device, and reorder without leaving the house—or the commode. Never buy TP in person again. Free.

LIGHT

WITH A POWERFUL 200-LUMEN LIGHT OUTPUT AND FOUR LIGHT SETTINGS, THE HANDS-FREE KOBALT HYPERCOIL LED LIGHT SHINES EXACTLY WHERE YOU NEED IT TO GET THE JOB DONE.

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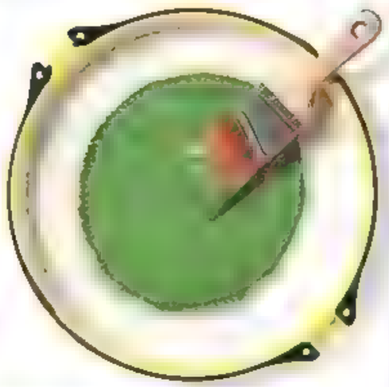
TOOLS

Drip-free disk

PAINT HANDY PLUS, BY PAINT HANDY

The velvety nap on this Frisbee-like paint tray seems to defy physics, absorbing up to a pint of paint without dribbling a drop—even when the disk is upside down—then easily transferring it onto a brush or a small roller. Truly amazing. $38; painthandy.com



Screw-saver

18V LXDT06Z QUICK-SHIFT MODE 3-SPEED IMPACT DRIVER, BY MAKITA

$

Impact drivers pack a powerful punch but often leave behind a trail of stripped screws and split boards. This one automatically reduces impact force and rotation speed in the final seconds of driving for a level of control you'd otherwise look for in a less powerful drill/driver. $179 (tool only); makitausa.com

On the level

AIR WEDGE, BY WINBAG

We wish we'd thought of this ingenious inflatable reinforced rubber bag. Slip it under heavy appliances, kitchen cabinets, or anything up to 220 pounds—the 6-inch square is only ⅛ inch thick—and squeeze the bulb to jack them up off the ground while you shim or level them. Fully inflated, it stands 2¾ inches tall. Also comes in handy for tippy café tables. $25; leevalley.com

Dexterous driver

DWARA100 RIGHT-ANGLE ATTACHMENT, BY DEWALT

Meet the first right-angle drive attachment designed to stand up to the force of an impact driver, thanks to sturdy steel gears. $20; dewalt.com

Retro pliers

SIDEWINDER PLIERS, BY LEE VALLEY

An exact replica of a tool from the 1870s, these cast-carbon-steel pliers have a serpentine handle that works as a fulcrum, making them perfect for pulling tacks or brads. And if you snap one off, the teeth are sharp enough to sink it flush with the floor. $15; leevalley.com

Prudent blades

DRYWALL ACCESS SAWZALL BLADE, BY MILWAUKEE TOOL

These stubby reciprocating-saw blades have specialized blunted teeth designed to cut through drywall up to ⅝ inch thick without slicing through pipes and wires that may be lurking on the other side. $10; milwaukeetool.com

Ultimate jigsaw

CARVEX 420 SERIES JIGSAW, BY FESTOOL

$

Handling curves doesn't get any easier. The motor adapts its speed to the material; a blower clears dust from your cutline; and LEDs synchronize with the blade, creating the illusion that it's stationary and making it easier to guide. $350; festoolusa.com/jigsaws

Infinitely adjustable bar clamp

2×4 CLAMPS, BY STANLEY

You could collect a quiver of bar clamps or, for a lot less, snap these on any old 2×4 to turn the board into a temporary clamp exactly the size you need. If that's not versatile enough to earn a spot in your toolbox, you can flip the two pieces around to make a spreader. $20; stanleytools.com

Nifty nailer

23-GAUGE PIN NAILER, BY BOSCH

$

Anyone who has ever installed a stretch of molding only to discover that the gun has been firing nothing but compressed air for (oh) the past 5 minutes will cherish a nailer that stops when the magazine's empty. Not that we've ever made that mistake. $159; boschtools.com

Super-charged sprayer

FLEXIO 590 SPRAYER, BY WAGNER SPRAYTECH

This paint gun packs three times the power of the competition, making it the first handheld model with enough oomph to spray super-thick paints or stains that haven't been thinned out first. The power dial has 10 settings to regulate flow, meaning you can finish furniture or paint the side of your house with a single tool. $149; wagnerspraytech.com

No more bloody knuckles

WOBBLE RATCHET, BY CRAFTSMAN

Nothing's so aggravating as trying to turn a bolt in confined quarters—unless the head of your ratchet swivels on its axis, like this one does. It's a long-overdue design fix. The telescoping handle lets the tool slip into tight spots. $40 for a 30-piece set; craftsman.com

Hands-free helper

BENCHJAWS, BY ROCKWELL

We couldn't resist a vise that provides what every DIYer really needs: an extra set of hands in the workshop. Step on the pedal to clamp down on anything you can fit in its jaws, which extend as far as 16 inches and hold up to 220 pounds. $130; rockwelltools.com

Stud whisperer

PROSENSOR 710, BY FRANKLIN SENSORS INC.

No more sweeping back and forth to find both sides of a stud. 13 sensors work simultaneously, illuminating every LED over a stud and taking the guesswork out of finding its center. Works nearly as well on lath-and-plaster as drywall. Best of all? It actually works. $60; franklinsensors.com

Metal Detector

iOS

Locate sleeper studs in the wall or lost magnetized screws around the workbench. Free

Handyman Calculator

ANDROID

Calculate materials, track time spent on projects, and save calculations to a notepad. Free

PHOTOS (PAINT DISK, IMPACT DRIVER, AIR WEDGE, BLADES, PLIERS, CLAMPS, SPRAYER, RATCHET, STUD FINDER): TED MORRISON

CUT

INDOORS OR OUTDOORS, UNDER THE CAR, OR AROUND THE HOUSE—NO TASK IS TOO TOUGH FOR THE THREE-IN-ONE POWER OF KOBALT TRIPLE CUT.

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HOME TECH

Lean, clean window machine

WINBOT 7 WINDOW-CLEANING ROBOT, BY ECOVACS ROBOTICS

This spunky bot uses suction to glom on to vertical glass and then methodically dampens, squeegees, and dries it as two grippy caterpillar treads push it along. Works best on large undivided windows, inside and out. The power cord, which wraps around a suction cup, provides fall protection. $399; winbot7.com

Affordable LED

9.5-WATT A LAMP LED BULB, BY CREE

It's hard to focus on longevity and energy savings when an LED bulb costs $40. But this incandescent look-alike breaks an important price barrier. It sheds a warm, even light that's nice to read by and works with standard dimmers—for less than the cost of a movie ticket. $10; cree.com

Battery nanny

SUMP MINDER, BY WAYNE WATER SYSTEMS

It's easy to forget about that squat pump at the bottom of your basement sump—until the floodwaters start to rise. This complete backup system keeps tabs for you, monitoring power to your main pump as well as the status of a backup pump, its battery, and a float switch. And if anything goes wrong, you'll receive an automated phone call. $490; waynepumps.com

Hot water for less

PRESTIGE CONDENSING POWER DIRECT VENT WATER HEATER, BY RHEEM

This is the most efficient tank-type gas water heater you can buy. Period. The reason: Its long, spiraling flue routes combustion gases around the inside of the tank, allowing the water to capture heat that would otherwise escape. Starting at $1,399; rheem.com

Magic-touch lock

KEVO DEAD BOLT, BY KWIKSET

It looks and installs like a standard dead bolt, but this Bluetooth-enabled lock is the first to employ touch-to-open tech using smartphones as electronic keys. It lights up when your iPhone (4s or later) comes within range, then unlocks when you touch it. Works with the included fob and standard key, too. $219; kwikset.com/kevo

So long, black plastic; hello, walnut

PASSIVE BOOKSHELF SYSTEM, BY GRAIN AUDIO

Crafted from FSC-certified walnut and rubbed down with VOC-free oil, these hi-fi speakers are built to blend in, with the look and feel of furniture. We appreciate that the flawless acoustics are just as rich and warm as the aesthetics. $699 a pair; grainaudio.com

Propane power player

LP5500 PORTABLE GENERATOR, BY GENERAC POWER SYSTEMS

The last thing you want to face when the power goes out is a clogged carburetor. Won't happen with this 5½-kilowatt propane-powered unit. It accepts the same tank as your grill and will keep your fridge, furnace, lights, and a few other creature comforts humming right along for up to 7 hours. $799; generac.com

Paging George Jetson

PHILIPS HUE 1.1 NETWORKED LIGHTING SYSTEM, BY PHILIPS

Connect the base station to your router, download the free app, and screw the LEDs into standard sockets—then dream up ways to program them. Have the lights switch on when you enter, turn violet when the forecast calls for rain, or flash red when you receive an e-mail from your boss. The future, apparently, has arrived. $199 for a three-light kit; meethue.com

Fire and water

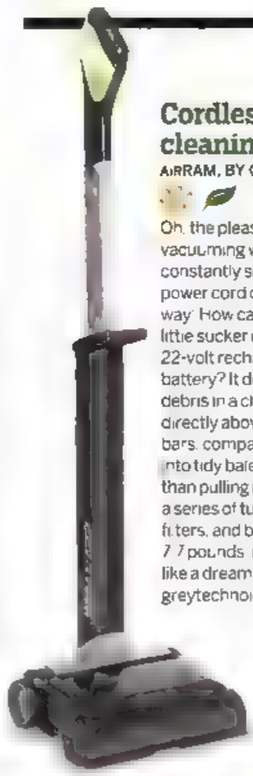
DW9280 STEAMFORCE IRON, BY ROWENTA

The burst that hisses from this German steam machine measures 210 grams per minute. So? You can use it vertically or horizontally to strip wallpaper, erase carpet dents, remove stickers—or even press your clothes. $175; rowentausa.com

Safe wiring simplified

SMARTLOCKPRO AFCI RECEPTACLE, BY LEVITON

By halting the arcs that cause most residential electrical fires, arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) are true lifesavers—but electricians had to install them at the breaker panel. Here's the first AFCI you can install yourself directly at an outlet box. $29; leviton.com/afci



Cordless cleaning

AIRRAM, BY GTECH

Oh, the pleasure of vacuuming without constantly snaking the power cord out of the way. How can this sleek little sucker run on a 22-volt rechargeable battery? It deposits debris in a chamber directly above the brush bars, compacting it into tidy bales rather than pulling it through a series of tubes, filters, and bags. At 7.7 pounds, it handles like a dream. $350; greytechnology.com

Cutting-edge cooling

XC25 AIR CONDITIONER, BY LENNOX

With a SEER of 25, this unit's efficiency surpasses all others, thanks largely to its variable-capacity compressor—an industry first for residential AC. The trick? It continually tailors its output to your home's cooling needs. From about $8,000 installed; lennox.com

PHOTOS: WINBOT; LED BULB; SPEAKERS; VAC; IRON; LIGHTING SYSTEM; AC: ED MORRISON

APPS

Neat

ANDROID AND iOS

Scan receipts, business cards, and other documents with your iPhone, then use this app to search those data files. Neat's secure cloud (free) and Pro ($5 a year) apps

Home-Inspection Checklist

ANDROID

Be sure before you buy with this pro inspector's checklist. Add photos, rate conditions, and e-mail the completed document. Free

GRIP

KOBALT MAGNUM GRIP LOCKING PLIERS ADJUST AND LOCK IN A SINGLE MOTION—WITH JUST ONE HAND—FOR A QUICK, AND SECURE, ROCK-SOLID HOLD.

KOBALT

Next Generation of Tough Tools.
Learn more at Lowes.com/KobaltTools

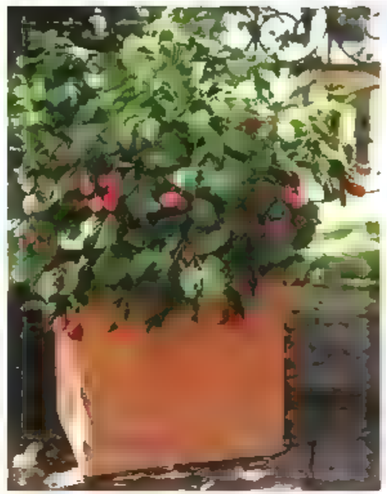
Available only at LOWE'S

OUTDOOR LIVING

Fresh fruit, hold the trellis

BRAZELBERRIES RASPBERRY SHORTCAKE RASPBERRY BUSH, BY FALL CREEK FARM & NURSERY

No yard is too small for growing this new dwarf variety. It forms a compact, thornless mound no wider than 3 feet yet produces sweet, full-size summer fruit. Plant bushes in big pots on a sunny patio, or as a groundcover. In Zones 5 through 9. $32 each. brazelberries.com



Dig it

THE ESSENTIAL KIT, BY REDHED

The heirloom quality of this mix-and-match tool kit caught our eye. The case includes four powder-coated-steel tool heads (two shovels, a rake, and a broom) and five hickory handles with fittings that make switching tasks or handle lengths a snap. $349. redhedtools.com

Move over, sliced bread

SCOTCHBLUE EXTERIOR PAINTER'S TAPE, BY 3M

What's better than blue tape? Super flexible *plastic* blue tape. It stands up to wet weather, stretches to follow curves, and, coolest of all, tears with a perfectly straight edge. $10; scotchblue.com

Hill topper

HU800AWD PUSH MOWER, BY HUSQVARNA

Powered push mowers are fine for flat lawns, but throw in the slightest slope and most will struggle up it like a Mustang on ice. This is the first one with a drivetrain that sends power to all four wheels, and it easily handles hills at a nice, constant pace. $499; husqvarna.com

Beastly blower

3X THREE-STAGE POWER SNOW THROWER, BY CUB CADET

A corkscrew-shaped chopper in the front of the scoop punches through snow walls up to 18 inches tall and dices even the iciest snow fed in from the augers, accelerating it through the chute 50 percent faster than the previous model did. $1,399; cubcadet.com

Clean sweep

36V LITHIUM SWEEPER/VACUUM, BY BLACK & DECKER

This cord-free blower handily herds leaves and twigs into tidy piles, then converts to a vacuum, mulching and depositing the debris in the attached bag. $149; blackanddecker.com

Sitting pretty

WINDSOR SETTEE, BY THREE COINS CAST

Weatherproof never looked so stylish. Borrowing the spindled look of the Windsor chair, this sturdy cast aluminum bench has room enough to comfortably cradle two and comes in 23 different painted finishes, from antiqued bronze (shown) to a lemony yellow. $1,000; threecoins.com

PHOTOS: (SHARP TAPE, SEEDLINGS, DECKING, TROUGH, WEEDER, MAILBOX) TED MORRISON ILLUSTRATION: ARTHUR MOUAT

Jump-start seedlings

PEEL AWAY 4-INCH POT KIT, BY VELCRO

Encourage healthy roots with these nifty seed starters. Breathable sides let air reach developing roots, causing them to branch out rather than spiral back on themselves. The Velcro seams are easy to pull apart at planting time. Then just wash the pots and store them flat until next spring. $25 for a tray and a set of three; velcro.com

Tight is right

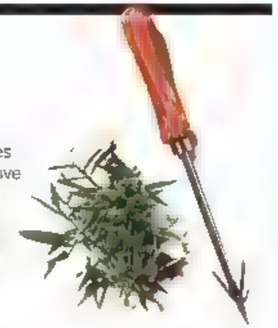
EDGETITE PAVER EDGING SPIKES, BY EDGETITE PRODUCTS INC.

Invented by a frustrated paving installer from Illinois, the angled tip on these spikes wedges the shaft tightly against the pavers when they're hammered into place, keeping them from budging. $60 for a box of 160; edgetite.com

Wicked weeder

WROTTER, BY SNEEBOER MANUFACTURING

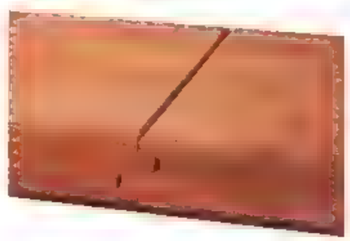
We're all for anything that makes hand weeding easier. Simply drive the hand-forged stainless-steel shaft into the soil alongside the stem, and its angled barbs will catch the roots when you pull back, bringing up the entire weed. $31; sneeboer.com



Home run

THERMALLY MODIFIED HARDWOOD DECKING WITH JEM JOINTS, BY THERMORY

An innovative interlocking-end match joint lets you butt deck boards between joists, nearly eliminating the material waste of cutting them back to the nearest support. This is possible only because the wood is so strong. It's Ameri can ash (think Louisville Slugger) thermally treated to resist pests and rot. About $6 per linear foot; thermoryusa.com



Crafty concrete

CAST WOOD TROUGH, BY NATIVECAST

Made according to a homemade recipe of demolition-site rubble and natural materials, from sand to pine needles, this 8-by-17-inch vessel weighs in at just 10 pounds. Its rustic surface comes from a cast of mushroom board—naturally weathered wood salvaged from Pennsylvania mushroom farms. $120; nativecast.com

Package pal

ELEPHANTRUNK PARCEL DROP, BY ARCHITECTURAL MAILBOXES

Don't fret over the fate of midday deliveries when you're away. Bolt this 3-foot-tall container to any hard surface outside your front door and let your courier drop your parcel into a locked bin—well protected from rainy skies and nosy neighbors. From $299; architecturalmailboxes.com

BBQ TankMeter

ANDROID

Hook an Android phone's [illegible] to your propane tank's [illegible] quarter, and this app analyzes the [illegible] of the cooker's [illegible] and [illegible] how much [illegible] left. $2.16

Mosquito Repellent

ANDROID

[illegible] your phone's volume [illegible] the frequency [illegible] at the [illegible] range and [illegible] mosquitoes in the area that [illegible] are annoying or [illegible]. Free

FLEX

WITH ITS MAGNETIC BASE AND 360-DEGREE PIVOTING HEAD, THERE'S NO SPOT IN YOUR WORKSHOP THAT THE HANDS-FREE KOBALT HYPERCOIL LED LIGHT CAN'T REACH.

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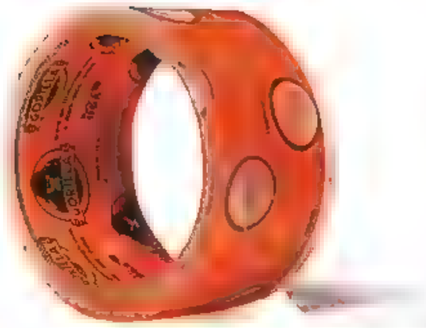
BUILDING PRODUCTS

Diamonds in the roof

SIENNA LIFETIME DESIGNER SHINGLES, BY GAF

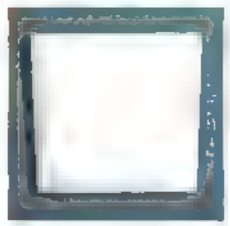
Echoing the look of vintage hexagonal roofing, which seemed to have gone the way of the dodo, these asphalt shingles are engineered to withstand 130-mph winds. Lifetime warranty against manufacturing defects. About $177 per square. gaf.com



Super thin, super efficient

FLATLIGHT, BY PIXI LIGHTING

At just 0.55 inch thick, this innovative LED fixture rests nearly flush with the ceiling and casts a remarkably even and flattering warm light from its bezel. It's rated to last 50,000 hours and draws just 15 watts per square foot of fixture. Choose from three sizes: 1 by 1, 1 by 2, and 2 by 2. From $80; pixilighting.com



Tough tape you can't see

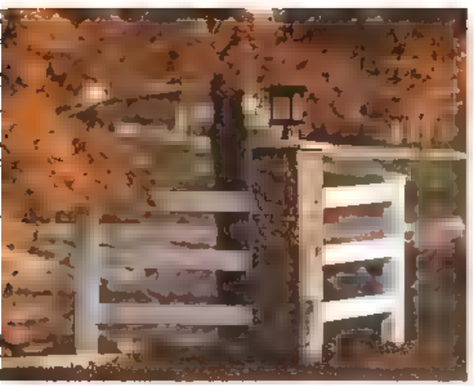
GORILLA CLEAR REPAIR, BY THE GORILLA GLUE COMPANY

Proud as you may be of clever duct tape repairs around the house, honestly? They're not attractive. This transparent alternative, made of the same plastic that encases golf balls, virtually disappears once applied. It tears easily and stays put, thanks to a thick acrylic adhesive the maker claims is five times stronger than the silver stuff. $7; gorillaglue.com

Wonder wood

ACCOYA ALDER, BY ACCSYS TECHNOLOGIES

Acetylation makes wood harder, more stable, and more rot resistant than its untreated counterparts, without any toxic chemicals. Nice, but available only in bland pine. We were happy to discover acetylated alder, a hardwood that can be stained to look just like its tropical cousins but is sustainably harvested. $8 per board foot; accoya.com



Rock your posts

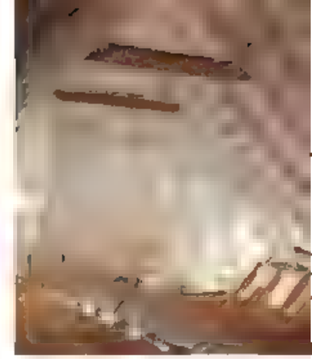
THE COLUMN COLLECTION FROM PLY GEM STONE, BY PLY GEM

Interlocking squares of foam-backed, cast concrete slip over 5×5 wood posts, turning them into elegant, ledgestone-look pillars for fencing or stand-alone columns for lamps or mailboxes. No footing or adhesive is required. $900 for a 13-piece kit for one column; kroy.plygem.com

Primed and ready

PATCH PLUS PRIMER SPACKLING, BY 3M

Spackling must be primed? Unless, that is, you use this new water-based patching compound. Proprietary pigments and polymers allow it to be top-coated without affecting paint sheen, adhesion, or opacity. And microscopic glass and ceramic spheres prevent cracking or shrinking as it dries. $6 for an 8-ounce tub; 3M.com



Fire-beating buffer

CLASSIC MAX OPEN-CELL FOAM, BY ICYNENE

There's no better insulation for attics than spray foam, but code requires it to be covered by an ignition barrier (drywall) as protection from fire. Not that some fire retardants should let you skip the expense of the barrier after you insulate. Rated at R-3.7 per inch. About $3.40 per square foot; icynene.com

Black-tie affair

ORNAMENTAL WOOD TIES, BY OZCO BUILDING PRODUCTS

Whether it's a simple mailbox post or an intricate roof truss, these hefty steel connectors securely join the lumbers and turn those joints into things of beauty. Structural screws hold the hot-dip galvanized, powder-coated pieces in place. The hex-head "bolts" are decorative caps. 6×6 Laredo Sunset post base kit (shown) $50; ozcoproducts.com

No-foam glue

PROBOND ADVANCED, BY ELMER'S PRODUCTS INC.

This versatile acrylic adhesive has the strength of a polyurethane glue with none of the messy foaming. It shines when gluing porous to nonporous materials (concrete to metal, wood to glass) but will also bind porous materials. Even better, it cleans up with water. $11 for 8 ounces; elmers.com

Like a duck's back

NEVERWET LIQUID REPELLING TREATMENT, BY RUST-OLEUM

Liquid rolls right off any surface sprayed with this two-part superhydrophobic silicone-derived coating, leaving it impeccably, impossibly dry. Use the treatment to keep water and mud off masonry, lawn mowers, boots, and plenty of things we haven't even thought of yet. It leaves a milky film that can wear off, so it's not recommended for windows, fabric, or floors. $20; rustoleum.com

Sun-powered skylight

NO-LEAK SOLAR POWERED "FRESH AIR" SKYLIGHT, BY VELUX

It closes automatically when it rains and obediently opens and shuts on command via remote control. The skylight draws all its power from a built-in solar panel, so you don't need to hire an electrician to help with the installation. Both the unit and its optional motorized blinds are eligible for a 30 percent federal tax credit. Starting at $1,118; veluxusa.com

This one's a keeper

DRAFTSTOP 812 STOP N' STORE FOAM, BY DAP

Used to be that once you pulled the trigger on a can of foam, the deal was to use it—all of it—or lose it. This low-pressure formulation won't harden up right away though, so you can plug drafty holes at your leisure for up to 30 days. $16 for a 16-ounce can; dapspecline.com

Nextdoor

ANDROID AND iOS

[illegible] private networking app to connect to [illegible] neighborhood [illegible] about [illegible] trends, tales on your block. Free.

iRecycle

ANDROID AND iOS

Take the hassle out of throwing out paint, construction debris, and [illegible] waste with this GPS-based app. It shows you the quickest route from [illegible] to a [illegible] disposal spot in [illegible] area. Free.

PHOTOS: TAPE, WOOD PRIMER, ROOF, PEPE, ANTIGRAFFITI TREATMENT, FOAM: TEJU MORRISON

SLICE

KOBALT TRIPLE CUT SHEARS SLICE CLEANLY AND PRECISELY THROUGH EVEN THE TOUGHEST MATERIALS, LIKE WEATHER-STRIPPING, HOSES, AND BASEBOARD MOULDING.

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FINISHING TOUCHES

THE TOH TOP 100 BEST NEW HOME PRODUCTS 2013

DIY tile design

CUERDA SECA, BY FIRECLAY TILE

In a rare blend of old-world craftsmanship and digital-era customization, you can choose from over 150 templates, mostly Mexican and Moroccan, and have 4- or 6-inch squares handmade to order in up to six colors you specify. From $16 per tile. fireclaytile.com

Map it out

MAP PAPER, BY SWAG PAPER

Nothing adds a historic touch like a vintage map, all the better if it's printed on removable wallpaper. Ten antique maps, from Chicago to Paris to the entire world, come in panels up to 12½ feet wide. From $35. swagpaper.com

Perfect patterns

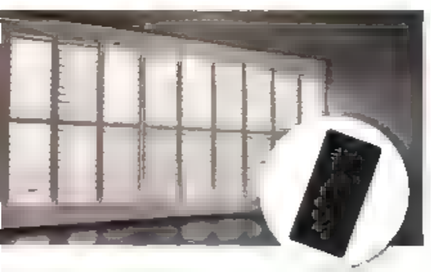
SHAPE TAPE, BY FROGTAPE

To paint a decorative border, you could spend hours drawing your pattern and cutting strips of tape to mark it off, or well, you could buy a roll of this crafty stuff in a precut chevron, scallop, or wave. $15 for a roll. frogtape.com

Salvaged beauty

RECLAIMED PINE BOOKCASE, BY WISTERIA

Made of recycled pine and iron and modeled after early-20th-century file cabinets, this splurge-worthy piece isn't just a pretty facade—it's also a marvel of storage. Four slim drawers are perfect for silverware, and the lower ones are large enough to stash linens and such. $1,999; wisteria.com



Open—and close—sesame

PERFECTTILT RF, BY NORMAN WINDOW FASHIONS

No window is hard to reach with this shutter system. Remote-control louvers adjust from 65 feet away, or you can program the remote to open and shut them on a schedule. And no need to call an electrician: They run on rechargeable batteries. From $255. normanshutters.com

Full-metal top coat

MOLTEN METALLICS, BY BENJAMIN MOORE

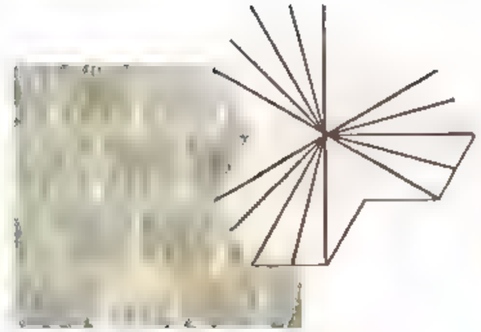
These rich metallic paints boast the most authentic hammered texture we've seen yet. Brush any of the six intense colors onto plaster, wood, or drywall for a textured metal look with a slick, glossy shine—great for creating an accent piece with maximum impact. $23 per quart. benjaminmoore.com

PHOTOS: *TILES* PAINT TAPE STENCIL MILLWORK MINIBLINDS RX PENDANT TED MORRISON

Tile with a twist

DANDELION TILE, BY CLAESSON KOIVISTO RUNE FOR MARRAKECH DESIGN

We love that this cleverly conceived tile lets you play designer. Just rotate the orientation of the encaustic cement hexagons and you get a whole new look, with a bewildering permutation of patterns—even before factoring in the 13 color schemes. $19 per square foot, contemporarytiles.se



Anything but cookie-cutter

IKAT STENCIL, BY ROYAL DESIGN STUDIO

We never expected to see a wall stencil made to mimic woven ikat textile, what with its blurred-edge patterns, but this one trades crisp outlines for imperfect ones to produce an organic effect. $46 for small and $54 for large. royaldesignstudio.com

Mid-century for the masses

STOCKHOLM CHAIR, BY IKEA

If you've ever passed up a $500 vintage Hans Wegner dining chair, your prudence just paid off. This one boasts a similar look, with a curved back, sloped armrests, and a warm walnut finish—you'd be hard-pressed to find a prettier piece for less. $139. ikea.com

New old-fashioned

TURNING PENDANT, BY WEST ELM

With its turned ash wood base, this otherwise contemporary looking fixture offers a nod to homespun craftsmanship, a rarity in drum-shade lights. $149. westelm.com

Straight and narrow

MINI BLIND Rx

Chad Wooters tried every search term he could think of to find a widget that would iron out a crinkled mini-blind slat. When the results came back with zilch, he designed and produced this crimping tool for 1-inch metal slats. Works like a charm. $13. miniblindrx.com

A river ran over it

ARCHITECTURAL MILLWORK, BY MAINE HERITAGE TIMBER

Tight grain gives away this wood's century-old provenance, and time spent at the bottom of the Penobscot River system explains its unique pickled patina. Chemical-free finishing—courtesy of the millworkers who turn it into wainscoting, trim, and flooring—makes it even classier. From $3 per square foot for wainscoting (shown). maineheritagetimber.com

APPS

ImageMeter

ANDROID

Snap a photo of a room on your smartphone and use this app to annotate the picture with measurements—a super power for anyone shopping. Furnishings to fit a space. Free

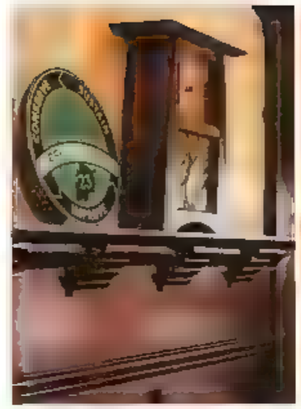
Color 911

iOS

Cherry-pick hues from photos, paint chips, or other themes created by a color consultant to customize palettes you can coordinate share e-mail or show to the person at the paint counter. $4.99

KOBALT Next Generation of Tough Tools. Learn more at Lowes.com/KobaltTools Available only at LOWE'S

signature details The living room's original fir paneling and colonnades were restored and refinished. OPPOSITE: Craftsman features include a tile-front clock, next to the house's green-building award, and period-style light fixtures.



cleaning up a classic craftsman

Energy-efficient updates, nontoxic finishes, and a save-what-you-can mind-set bring back the glow to a once neglected bungalow

by Fred Albert
photographs by Ken Gutmaker
produced by Colette Scanlon
styling by Sunday Hendrickson

Located half a block from the beach on a scenic stretch of Santa Cruz coastline, the 1907 Craftsman bungalow seemed to have plenty going for it. Dusky expanses of old growth fir wrapped the walls and windows in a warm embrace that extended from the paneled entry hall to the built-in buffet in the dining room. The recessed, column-lined porch offered a shady respite from the California sun, which flooded the living room through a generous bay window crowned with a leaded-glass transom.

For Jim and Joanne Lewis, who had dreamed about retiring by the ocean, it was exactly the kind of house they wanted. And yet the first time Jim saw the place, he couldn't wait to leave. All that period detail was upstaged by a Technicolor mix of orange shag carpeting and primary-colored walls that seemed better suited to a Mexican cantina than a 100-year-old Craftsman. Cloistered rooms were connected by narrow openings and door-lined halls, making the 1,500-square-foot house feel smaller than it actually was. And the worn knob-and-tube wiring and aging furnace seemed like disasters waiting to happen.

"The first time I looked at it I thought, *There's no way I can live in this,*" recalls Jim, a retired physician. But his late wife, Joanne, and her son, Roger Knapp—both real-estate agents—saw potential in the beleaguered bungalow. "They weren't quite as scared as I was," Jim says. "They could see what possibilities were there and what it would take to make it into a really nice home."

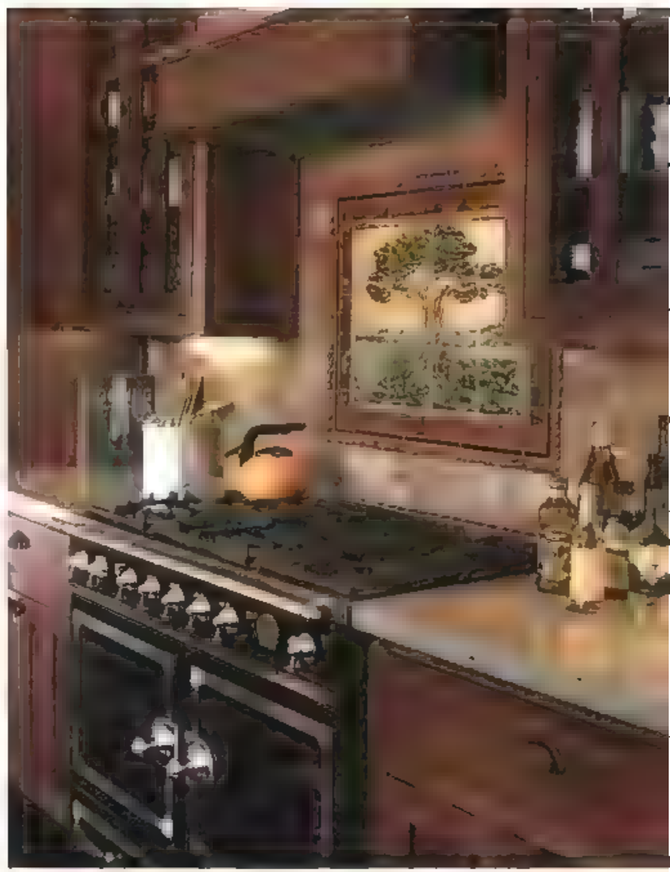
Joanne had always harbored a love for older houses, and seized the opportunity to return this one to its former glory—in a sustainable manner. "She was interested in living a low-impact lifestyle," says Roger. "Usually that doesn't go with these older homes, but it's not mutually exclusive if you take a thoughtful approach."

To learn more about green building and the options available to them, the Lewises met with Build It Green, a California nonprofit promoting resource-efficient housing. They also conferred with the City of Santa Cruz's building department, an early adopter of now-mandatory green construction requirements. On Roger's recommendation, they hired Brian Spector, a Santa Cruz architect experienced in sustainable design.

"They were going for a rich, warm, lived-in feel for the renovation," says Spector. "The existing house had these elements, but they were covered up over the years with age and wear." Since the home's basic layout was sound, Spector simply smoothed out some of the wrinkles. He consolidated a pair of convoluted hallways into a single passageway, borrowing a few feet to expand the master bath, which shed its faux-marble laminate for classic black-and-white tile and a soaking tub. The drop-down attic ladder was replaced with a proper staircase, making it easier for the couple to use the area for storage—which meant they didn't have to give up precious living space for more closets. They even managed to tuck a washer and dryer under the stairs.

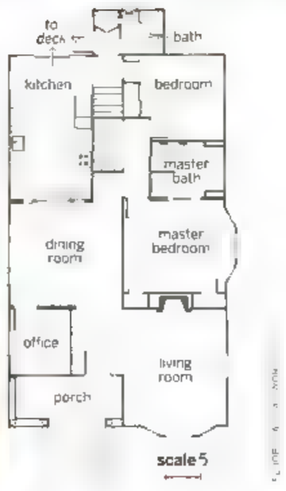
The architect combined the existing kitchen with a butler's pantry and a back hall to create a generous new room, which Spector calls the heart of the renovation, marrying Craftsman looks—paneled cabinets, leaded-glass light fixtures—with contemporary innovations, such as LED lighting and simulated-stone countertops made from 75 percent recycled content. The vintage-style La Cornue range was more of an aesthetic

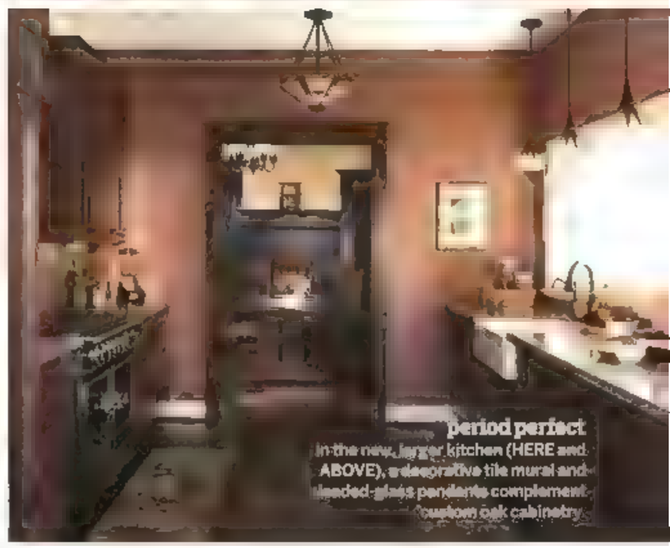
gracious living The dining room, with its Stickley-style table and chairs, features an original built-in buffet with leaded-glass cabinet doors.



floor plan

The 1,500-square-foot house kept its metal roof but got a new paint job. The kitchen grew by taking over the butler's pantry and back hall. The master bath gained a few feet when a doorway was relocated, a passageway between the dining room and kitchen was centered. French doors in back usher in more light.





period perfect In the new, larger kitchen (HERE and ABOVE), a decorative tile mural and leaded-glass pendants complement custom oak cabinetry.

indulgence—Jim just loved the way it looked.

French doors along the back wall brighten the space and offer a strong visual link to the outdoors and the new deck, made of redwood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). A narrow corner doorway to the dining room was replaced with a generous central opening fitted with pocket doors, allowing the cook to converse with guests while opening up views through the house.

Committed to reusing as many of the home's existing elements as possible, contractors Taylor Darling and Spencer Keenan, of Santa Cruz Green Builders, salvaged doors and woodwork and restored the existing 1907 hardware. When new lumber was needed, they purchased only FSC-certified wood and specified plywood containing little or no formaldehyde. All the drywall was made in the U.S. and free of volatile organic compounds, while paints were either low in VOCs or devoid of them.

Construction challenge number one was to bring the aging structure up to California's strict earthquake building codes, with anchor bolts, hold-downs, and shear walls added to protect the house against damage. Since half the exterior walls needed to be opened up to accommodate these changes, the crew seized the opportunity to add spray-foam insulation to the wall cavities, and to the underside of the floors as a moisture barrier. The remaining walls were left uninsulated to preserve the original lath and plaster construction, but were treated to a fresh skim coat.

Pulling up the wall-to-wall carpet in the living and dining rooms, the Lewises were surprised to find vintage linoleum area rugs affixed to the hardwood floors. Unfortunately, the linoleum was too brittle to preserve, so they removed it and refinished the floors. The floors in the master bedroom had been covered in oak, to match them, the second bedroom, the hallway between them, and the new kitchen all got new oak flooring. The living room's decaying brick fireplace was rejuvenated with an efficient gas insert and a new surround, accented with colorful Craftsman-inspired Motawi tiles.

Not everything original could be saved. "We talked about ways to try to fix the old wood windows, but it was just not going to work," says Jim. "Some of them were off-kilter, they were leaky and inefficient, and they didn't look nice." They were replaced with low-e, double-paned aluminum-clad wood windows that were in the period style but more energy efficient. Finally, the Lewises were going to dress the windows with heavy drapes, but after pricing things out, Joanne realized they could install interior shutters for about a third of the cost. The shutters offer excellent light and air control, Jim says, and fit the home's Craftsman character.

Most of the house's period fixtures are fitted with energy-saving LED lightbulbs, and the new kitchen is lit with LED recessed lights. "We prefer them because they last longer, they don't have mercury in them, they're fully dimmable, and they come on instantly," says Darling. He figures that each light costs upwards of $20 more than a comparable incandescent fixture but could return six times that amount in savings, given California's high electric rates.

Half of the spacious workshop/garage out back was converted to an art studio, which was then topped with a 3.088 kilowatt solar array. "That seemed to be the most appropriate place to do it," says Spector. "The building isn't visible from the curb, so it preserved the character of the main residence." A 660-gallon catch basin collects runoff from the studio's roof; the water is used to irrigate flower beds and an organic garden that replaced the concrete patio.

Darling estimates that all the green features probably added about 15 percent to the final tab. "For new construction, it usually adds 5 to 10 percent," he says. "But the payoff is so great, it's an excellent investment." Jim's electric bill, with all the LED lighting and the effect of the solar panels, averages about $12 a month.

The Lewises' efforts did not go unnoticed. After the house was finished, it received a Green Building Award from the City of Santa Cruz. Although the couple had renovated other homes, Jim says his wife really poured her heart into this project. Her devotion is evident in the soothing colors, the pitch-perfect blend of old and new woods, and the comfortable mix of family treasures and recent acquisitions.

"Joanne was a visionary," Jim says of his wife, who succumbed to cancer last year. "She loved old houses—particularly old Craftsman houses. Eventually, it rubbed off on me," he says, adding that he plans to stay in this one. "We remodeled it together—we made it ours." ■

SHOP THE STYLE
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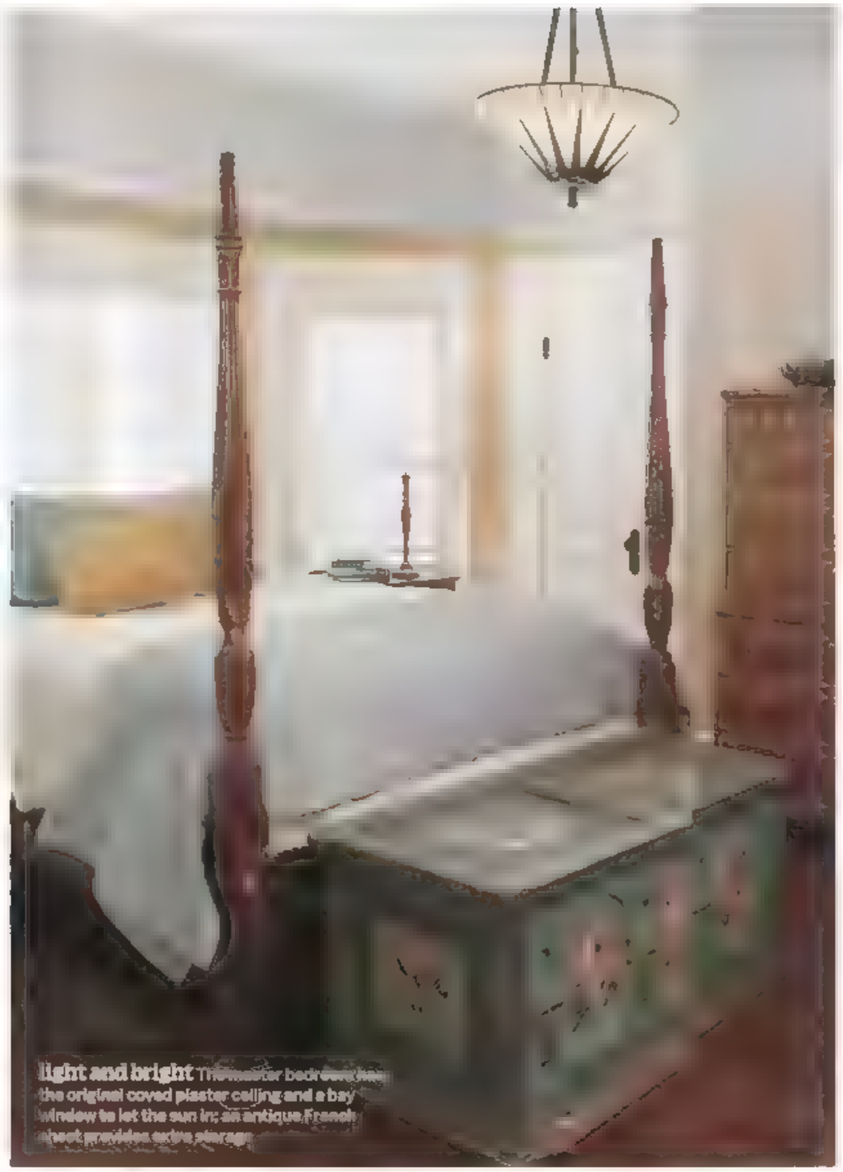


light and bright The master bedroom has the original coved plaster ceiling and a bay window to let the sun in; an antique French chest provides extra storage.

bigger and better ABOVE LEFT: Eliminating a doorway in the master bedroom and installing a pocket door leading to the bath allowed for a spacious master bath with a two-sink oak vanity and matching medicine cabinets. RIGHT: Classic black-and-white tile complements the vintage look of the claw-foot slipper tub. Oil-rubbed-bronze low-flow fixtures and fittings were used throughout.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

DINING ROOM DRAMA

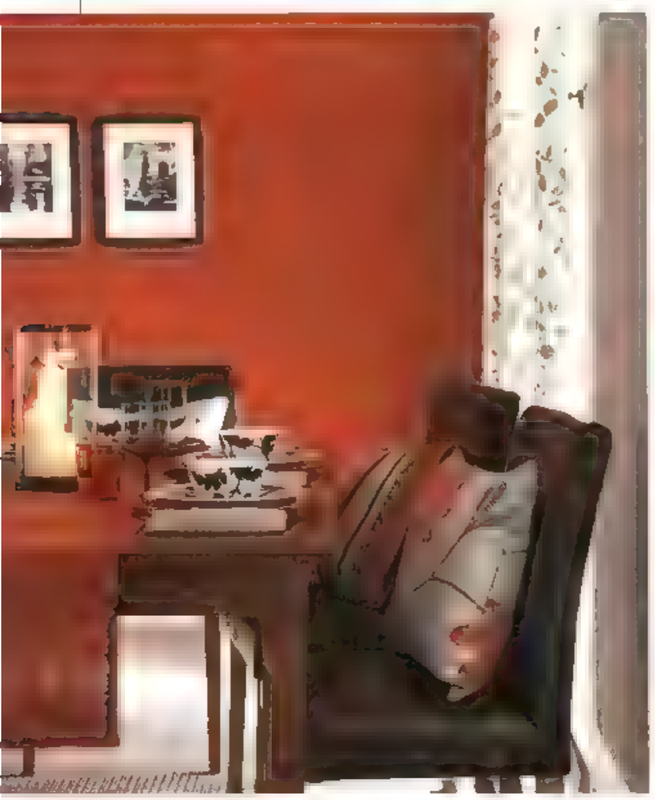
It's designed to set the stage for special events: mealtime celebrations with family and friends. So why not create a worthy backdrop for the festivities? The bold paint colors we've chosen on the following pages are guaranteed to transform any dining room from okay to extraordinary

BY DEBORAH BALDWIN

TRUFFLE BROWN

The cocooning color on these faux-paneled walls helps harmonize the varied wood tones throughout the room. But that's only part of the story. Extending the deep shade to the crown and panel moldings and to the windows and their trim gives the space a seamless look and the airy white ceiling a lift

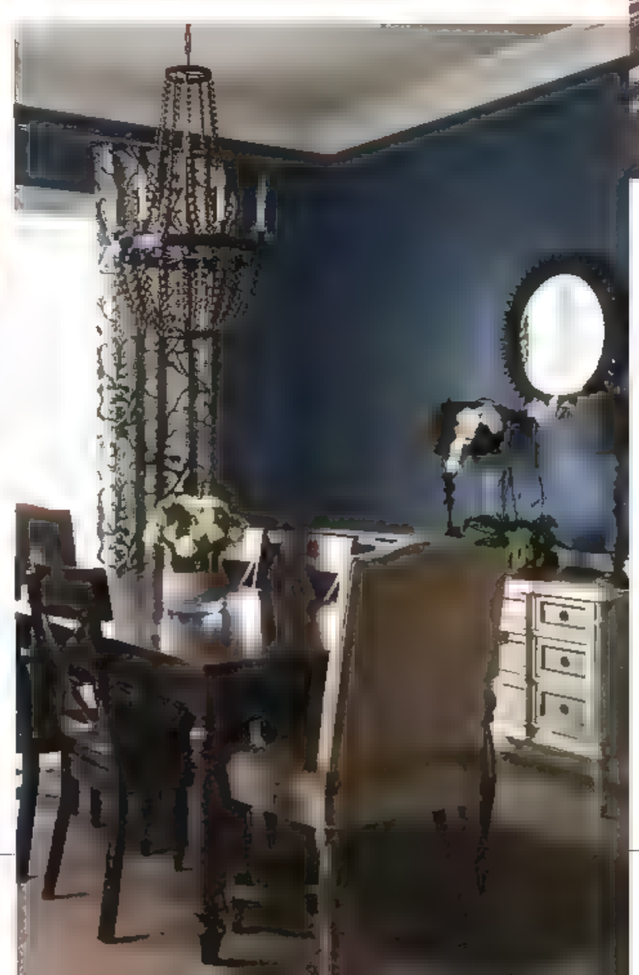
For a similar look, try:
GLIDDEN
Wild Truffle

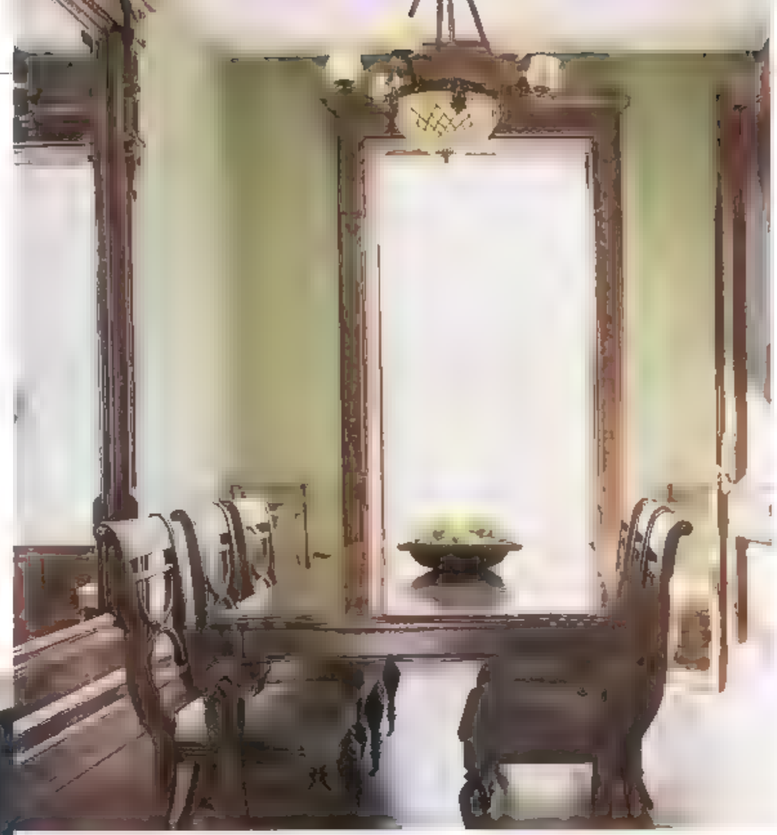


SPICY ORANGE

This dramatic-yet-sophisticated shade is as warm as red but less expected—it's a great update for a traditional dining set but works equally well with more modern, clean-lined pieces. Pale flooring and plenty of natural light help keep the high-octane hue from feeling too intense.

For a similar look, try:
BEHR
Summer Heat





APPLE GREEN

This crisp, energetic color can highlight ornate stained woodwork and give a formal space a fresh look. When it stretches all the way to a high ceiling, as it does here, it can also balance out dark flooring and furniture while bringing in just a touch of light-colored ceiling and a reverse-calming glow after

For a similar look, try:
BENJAMIN MOORE
Candy Green

MIDNIGHT SKY

Has enveloping blue tinged with green and black, sets off classic white-painted crown molding and chair rail beautifully. Eclectic furnishings in shades of linen and espresso brown help keep the sophisticated shade from looking too formal.

For a similar look, try:
VALSPAR
Azure Jazz

PHOTOS: PAINT JOBS—BRIAN PATTON/TOH, INC. DESIGN: ALEX STUDIO—DREAMING SPREAD—DOUGLAS JOHNSON; THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT AND BOTTOM RIGHT: TOH, EIC ROOM—EPPLESTREAD; TOP MARGARET T. IDEAL HOME/IPC SYNDICATION—EDITORIAL BRAIN—ORG

CITRUS YELLOW

This daring hue could look less than nuanced but nestles between tan tones and black and white as it does in this room. Here it gives the white-painted elements (table, floor covering) and bold darkness (chairs, decoys, picture frames) a welcoming, natural warmth.

For a similar look, try:
SHERWIN-WILLIAMS
Lemon Twist

MORE COLOR OPTIONS
Unlock five more paint picks in our tablet edition. To get yours, scan this page using your device and the Bitpar app or go to **thisoldhouse.com/tablet**

29 super-fast fixes, upkeep shortcuts, and easy upgrades to get your home ready for guests

With the holidays just around the corner, that means—uh-oh!—company's coming. If your home is looking a little rough around the edges, don't despair. We've got tips to help you spiff up the spots visitors are most likely to focus on, from the front stoop to the dining table

By **Wendy Manwarren Generes** • Photographs by **John Gruen** • Styling by **Ingrid Leess**

1. Perk up front door containers

Replant entry pots with winter hardy specimens, such as dwarf evergreens or boxwood (shown here), and ring the base with English ivy and a few faux berries for a festive shot of color. To give plants the best chance of surviving the winter, pot them in a container at least 4 inches taller and wider than the root ball. You can transplant them to your yard from spring until fall, says *This Old House* landscape contractor Roger Cook.

2. Add shine to dull wood floors

No time to get those lackluster boards screened and polyed before company comes? Put down a refresher. Look for a waterborne formula that will fill in tiny scratches and add shine but won't interfere with having your floors refinished in the future. Flooring pro Charles Peterson recommends Bona's Pro Series Hardwood Floor Refresher ($25, sears.com), which goes on with a microfiber mop, dries in an hour, and keeps floors gleaming for a couple of months.

3. Quiet a creaky bed frame

Don't let overnight guests toss and turn on a bed that squeaks. Remove the mattress and box spring and tighten any loose nuts, bolts, and screws; then lubricate metal joints with WD-40. Sprinkle talcum, baby, or graphite powder between the joints of a wood frame to help reduce friction.

4. Sweeten a stinky disposer

Rather than blades, garbage disposers have a ring of tooth-like shredders that tear into food particles. To keep the appliance working through big holiday meals, give the shredders a good cleaning beforehand. Combat odor-causing bacteria with cubes of frozen white vinegar. Toss a few down the drain, and, with the cold tap turned on, run the disposer for about a minute to remove built-up food and grease residue. Mix in a few citrus peels to leave the disposer smelling fresh.

5. Get those pictures up on the wall—finally

If you've been procrastinating about hanging artwork and family photos, try this trick to take the guesswork out of nail placement for picture backs with two D-rings. Place a piece of masking or painter's tape across the back, marking the rings' placement with a pen. Peel off the tape and place on the wall. Using a level to make sure the marks are straight, hammer picture hooks right through the tape, then peel it off and hang your frame.

6. Update a chandelier

Here's an instant improvement: Replace a cheap-looking hanging chain with a jute-wrapped pole that hides the cord—and looks a lot less fussy than a cover sleeve of bunched fabric. Available in three lengths from $39, balarddesigns.com.

7. Dress up a plain mirror

Adding a nice wood-finish frame to a plain plate-glass mirror or medicine-cabinet front instantly makes a guest bath feel more furnished. Streamline the job with a made-to-measure product that adheres directly to the glass with super-strong adhesive strips. MirrorMate, from $107, mirrormate.com.

8. Remove old stains from carpet

A set-in stain isn't always a lost cause. Attack the spot with a powerful homemade stain remover. Mix 1 teaspoon OxiClean with 2 cups water in a spray bottle and spritz the stain liberally. Cover with a damp white rag, then apply an iron on MEDIUM-LOW heat and let the steam do the work. Check frequently to see if the stain is transferring to the rag; repeat if necessary and rinse with warm water. No luck? See how to patch the carpet at thisoldhouse.com/novdec2013.

9. Add a doorbell

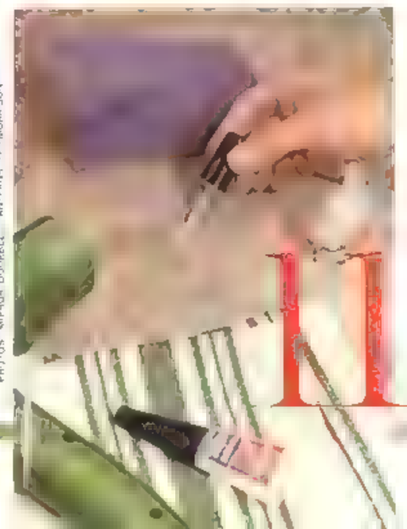
No time to fish wires? A mechanical twist model mounts directly to the door or casing and adds a welcoming dose of old-house charm. Installing it is easy. Working from outside, drill a hole through the door or casing material and make sure the metal rod is long enough to connect with the bell inside. If the shaft is too short, pick up a square bar at a hardware store and cut it to length. Woodworth antiqued-brass twist doorbell, $70, signaturehardware.com.

10. Stop a leaking showerhead

A showerhead that continues to drip even after the water is off likely indicates a dry or damaged washer. To replace it, turn the showerhead counterclockwise to remove it from the arm. Just inside the nozzle, there should be a small plastic or rubber washer you can swap out. Rewrap the arm tightly with plumber's thread seal tape, working clockwise, covering all the threads to help tighten the fittings. Replace the showerhead.

11. Fix a tear in a vinyl or linoleum floor

Grab a hair dryer or a heat gun to repair a gouge in resilient flooring. Use it to warm the area around the rip, then stretch and smooth the material back into place. Squeeze a thin, even layer of acrylic glue underneath the tear (and on the subfloor, if visible). Weight it down so that it lies flat, let dry. Any remaining gaps can be filled with layers of nail polish in a color close to that of the flooring, say the Vinyl Ladies' interior restoration and repair company. The polish will seep into and bond with the flooring.



PHOTOS: (WINDOW DOORBELL) ANTHONY TIEURAS (OTHER) JOHN GRESS

12. Neutralize pet odors

When you bring home a Fido or a Fluffy, you take the good with the bad (good: loyalty and affection; bad: eau de furball). Before guests arrive, mix any odors with plain old baking soda. Liberally sprinkle it over upholstered furniture and rugs and leave overnight to absorb smells before vacuuming. Use the upholstery and crevice tools on the cushions to get deep into nooks and crannies. If you're cleaning a litter box, put a layer of baking soda in the bottom before refilling with litter for extra defense against stink.

13. Light up your entry steps

Welcome guests with the warm glow of outdoor candlelight that won't blow out in the wind. Pepper the front steps or porch with glass-paneled lanterns in a mix of sizes and fill them with outdoor-rated battery-operated LED candles. Opt for ones with built-in timers so that they'll come on and turn off automatically for an even more low-effort display. Red brushed-metal lanterns, $15–$30, and outdoor LED candles, $14–$20, pier1.com.

14. Rid the tub of rust

Pick up a pumice stick—the kind with a handle designed for cleaning toilet bowls—to remove those rusty stains without scratching your porcelain. Soak the pumice stone in warm water for a minute, then start scrubbing gently. To prevent scratches to the porcelain, keep the surface and the stone wet, also steer clear of metal fittings that can be damaged. Pumie toilet bowl ring remover, $14, amazon.com.

15. Set an easy-care fire

Sure, roaring flames may set a cozy scene, but having to excuse yourself to tend the fire can interrupt the festivities. Instead of burning logs, add a low-maintenance glow to your fireplace with a large-scale candelabra. Use drip-less pillars, and you won't be stuck cleaning up spilled wax when the party's over. Nine-candle candelabra, $64, homedecorators.com.

16. Spruce up a worn threshold

Make your entrance look like new by painting over scuff marks. Apply two coats of latex enamel formulated for exterior floors, which resists scuffing, fading, cracking, peeling and mildew. Behr Premium Porch & Patio Floor Paint, $28 per gallon, homedepot.com.

17. Add reading lights

To prep for overnight guests who like to read in bed, hang decorative plug-in pendants—no hard-wiring required. Simply swag the cord up and over a ceiling-mounted hook to provide light that won't eat up precious nightstand space. Plug-in light adapter with 10-inch drum pendant, $79; ballarddesigns.com.

18. Fix a balky sideboard drawer

A bar of soap can unstick a drawer that has wood guide blocks instead of glides. Remove the drawer and rub plain soap along the guides on the drawer's bottom and on the center and side guide blocks. If that doesn't get the drawer moving, use 80- to 100-grit paper to lightly sand down the bottom edges, testing often, until the drawer glides easily again.

19. Clean up the cooktop

Getting rid of scorch marks on stainless steel is tough. Surprisingly, an excellent eraser can be found at your local auto-body-supply shop. Fine abrasive hand pads meant for prepping vehicles for paint can actually remove those marks from your range. But it's an off-label use, so proceed with caution, working gently with the finish's grain. 3M Scotch-Brite general-purpose hand pad, $2, at auto body supply shops.

20. Tighten a loose interior doorknob

Lovely old glass or brass knobs often loosen over time from constant use. To tighten them, remove the set-screws and pull off the knob. If the spindle's ridges show signs of extreme wear, wrap a piece of plumber's thread-seal tape around it before replacing it to tighten it up. Brush Loctite around the setscrews' threads to help hold them in place, and screw back in tightly. Loctite Threadlocker $6.50, and plumber's thread seal tape, $1.18, at home centers.

21. Skip making house-key copies

Hiding the spare set under a rock or having multiples floating around leaves your house vulnerable to thieves. Replace your lockset with an electronic touch pad and hand over the code to guests instead of a key. Some keyless entry sets can even be programmed with temporary codes. If the high-tech look doesn't mesh with your front entry's style, install it on a side or back door. Kwikset SmartCode Electronic Deadbolt, $99, homedepot.com.

22. Outsmart mice

You may joke about the in-laws, but rodents are the real unwanted guests this time of year. Mice can squeeze through an opening the size of a dime, so stuff Xcluder, a steel-wool-type material that won't rust, into any openings ($10, buyxcluder.com). Then set a better mouse trap: put out six snap traps in each room where mice have been spotted and position them perpendicular to the wall, with the bait closest to the wall. Bait the traps with a tiny bit of peanut butter or bacon, but don't set them—yet. Wait a couple of days to trick the rodents into thinking the traps are a safe source of food.

23. Give kitchen hardware a new look

Replacing a kitchen's worth of old knobs and pulls can be costly, but you can transform standard metal pieces into antique-looking bronze or aged copper for the price of a can of spray paint. Remove the hardware, spray several light coats over the pieces, and let dry before reinstalling. Tip: To ensure even results, screw knobs and pulls into sturdy cardboard before painting. Rust-Oleum Universal Metallic and Krylon Rust Protector Metallic Finish, $7–$9 for an 11-ounce can, at home centers.

24. Fix a chip in a bathroom sink

A color-matched porcelain repair kit makes unsightly nicks in porcelain or enameled cast iron virtually disappear. Look for a two-part formula that contains resin and a bonding agent for the longest-lasting results. Brush off any loose material, then clean the spot with an acetone-soaked swab. Mix the ingredients and apply it to the nick with a small paintbrush. Let dry 24 hours before using the sink. Porcelain repair kit, $28, refinishingonline.com.

25. Light up your address

Here's a bright idea: Make finding your house in the dark a breeze with an easy-to-install solar light. Hang a solar spot above existing house numbers, or simply stake a solar-powered address marker in a clearly visible place on the front lawn.

26. Replace a missing skeleton key

Veteran locksmith Tom Rubenoff says you can bring an old mortise lock in and have a key made for about $30—or make one yourself from a skeleton-key blank ($6, antiquekeys.net). Remove the lock from the door, and unscrew the lock case to expose its interior workings. Note the wards—the bumps on the case beside the keyhole—and the locking lever and bolt directly above it. For the lock to work, the key's bit has to turn past the wards, lift the lever, and engage the bolt. Put the key in a vise and use a warding file to cut notches into the key. Start small and test often until the key works the lock.

27. Hide scratches on a wood dining table

If eating, studying, mail sorting, and even light DIY projects take place on the table where you gather, the surface likely has more than a few nicks. For scratches that penetrate beyond the finish, rub a shelled walnut gently across the marks, then polish with a soft cloth. According to antiques restorer Christophe

FOR MORE TIPS
To access more tips, use a tablet or smartphone to scan this page, visit the Reporter app, or go to thisoldhouse.com/novdec2013

Pourny, the nut solis naturally conceal the blemishes. To blend the fix in with a high gloss finish, follow up with a fine paste wax for wood, and buff to a sheen.

28. Shine and seal brass hardware

To brighten up tarnished doorknobs, knockers, and hinges, first remove the hardware from the door. Apply a brass cleaner, such as Noxon ($3.98, lowes.com), rubbing the pieces with a soft cloth until the tarnish disappears. Prolong the shine by using a clean, soft cloth to apply a thin coat of a nonabrasive, polymer-based car wax (try Mother's Synthetic Wax, $10 for 16 ounces, at auto supply shops), then buff out the haze.

29. Add polish to a powder room

Give boring bathroom walls a dose of color and pattern with peel-and-stick wallpaper. No wetting or paste needed—just remove the backing as you smooth it onto the wall. The adhesive isn't affected by humidity but easily pulls away when you're tired of the style. From $75 per roll, tempaperdesigns.com.

PHOTOS: PEEL-BACK™ DAP PAINT AND HARDWARE WALLPAPER, TED MORRISON

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

See the complete *Downton Abbey* collection at **shopPBS.org/DowntonGifts**

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What is it?
Splash guard
Fitted on top of a 5 gallon plastic pail, the Bucket Splash Guard contains the overflow and globs that go flying when you power mix full containers of paint, joint compound, floor leveler and the like.
$15, bucketsplashguard.com

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LEGAL NOTICE

If you own or owned a Trex® brand non-shelled wood-plastic composite decking, railing, or fencing product purchased between August 1, 2004, and August 27, 2013 you may be eligible for benefits from a class action settlement.

Para una notificación en Español, visite
www.trex.com/legal/2013classactionsettlement.aspx
o llame 1-877-495-0068

A nationwide settlement has been reached in a class action lawsuit in which the plaintiffs allege that certain Trex composite decking, railing, and fencing material is susceptible to mold, mildew, fungal, or other dark or gray growth or spotting, or color variation or color fading (the "Covered Conditions").

Who Is Included?

If you own or owned a Trex non-shelled wood-plastic composite decking, railing, or fencing product that was purchased between August 1, 2004, and August 27, 2013, you may be included in the Settlement. You may send in a Claim Form and, if applicable, a Supplemental Claim Form, to request certain benefits, or you can exclude yourself from the Settlement. The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California authorized this notice and will have a hearing to decide whether to approve the Settlement. Get a detailed notice at www.trex.com/legal/2013classactionsettlement.aspx or by calling 1-877-495-0068.

How Do You Ask For Benefits?

You may receive benefits only if you fill out a Claim Form and, if applicable, a Supplemental Claim Form, and your Trex decking, railing, or fencing is affected by one of the Covered Conditions. The Claim Form and Supplemental Claim Form are available online at www.trex.com/legal/2013classactionsettlement.aspx or you can call 1-877-495-0068 to request them. The Claim Form and the Supplemental Claim Form must be faxed, e-mailed, or sent by U.S. Mail and postmarked by May 27, 2014, which is nine (9) months from entry of the Court's order granting preliminary approval of the Settlement.

What Does the Settlement Provide?

If you meet the settlement and eligibility criteria, Trex will provide you with one of three options of relief: Tier 1 Relief, Tier 2 Relief, or Tier 3 Relief. Tier 1 Relief consists of a one-time cash payment of $150, subject to pro rata reductions if the Tier 1 set-aside described herein is oversubscribed, but in no event less than $20 unless pro rata reductions are required due to the cost-caps discussed below ("Tier 1 Relief"). At least $14 million will be set aside to pay Tier 1 Claimants. The $14 million amount was arrived at by taking the number of Class Members receiving Class Notice by Regular Mail and E-Mail based on Defendant's records (approximately 70,000) and multiplying that number by $200. The $14 million number is provided for illustration purposes; the final amount of the Tier 1 set-aside will be determined after Defendant, in consultation with Class Counsel, determines the total number of Class Members to whom Class Notice by Regular Mail and E-Mail will be sent. Once all qualified Tier 1 Claimants have received Tier 1 Relief, then any amount of the Tier 1 set-aside remaining will be available for Tier 2 Relief and Tier 3 Relief. Tier 2 Relief consists of: (a) reimbursement of the cost of purchasing cleaning product at a flat rate of $18; and (b) a non-transferable payment certificate entitling you to a cash reimbursement equal to 40% of the retail purchase price paid by you to purchase certain new Trex decking and Trex-brand fasteners (if you used these in your current Trex Structure) to replace your existing Trex decking and Trex-brand fasteners, if applicable. Tier 3 Relief consists of (a) reimbursement of the cost of purchasing cleaning product at a flat rate of $18; and (b) either (i) a non-transferable payment certificate entitling you to a cash reimbursement equal to 50% of the retail purchase price paid by you to purchase certain new Trex decking and Trex-brand fasteners (if you used these in your current Trex Structure) to replace your existing Trex decking and Trex-brand fasteners, if applicable; and a payment for labor reimbursement at the formulaic rate of 50.23 cents per linear foot of replacement decking, or (ii) a refund of 20% of the original purchase price of your current Trex Product. The Settlement is subject to an $8.25 million cost-cap and a potential pro rata reductions if the total sum of value claims exceeds $8.75 million. More information is available in the detailed notice and at www.trex.com/legal/2013classactionsettlement.aspx.

What Are Your Other Rights?

If you fall within the class definition, you may remain in the class by doing nothing and be bound by the release and judgment in the lawsuit. If you do not want to be bound by the Settlement, you must exclude yourself prior to 45 days from the last date that Notice is sent by Trex or first published as set forth in the Notice Plan, which is described in the Settlement Agreement (the "Opt-Out Period"). Please check www.trex.com/legal/2013classactionsettlement.aspx for updates on the deadline. The detailed notice explains how to exclude yourself.

Any Opt-Out request must be sent by first-class mail to Defendant's counsel postmarked on or before the end of the Opt-Out Period. You must mail a letter requesting exclusion to Counsel for Defendant. For the address of Counsel for Defendant, go to the website at www.trex.com/legal/2013classactionsettlement.aspx or call 1-877-495-0068.

If you do not exclude yourself from the Settlement, you may object to it by filing an objection with the U.S. District Clerk, U.S. Courthouse, 450 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, California 94102, and sending the Defendant's Counsel and Class Counsel, postmarked not later than 75 days before the date set for the Final Settlement Hearing. The Court will hold a hearing in this case, *Mahan v. Trex Company, Inc.*, No. 09-cv-00670-JW, on December 13, 2013, to consider whether to approve the Settlement and Class Counsel's request for fees, costs, and expenses of $1,875,000 including interest. Class Counsel will also ask for a payment of $7,500 to each Class Representative. You or your lawyer may attend the hearing.

For more information, go to the website at www.trex.com/legal/2013classactionsettlement.aspx, call 1-877-495-0068, or e-mail trexclasssettlement@trex.com.

Directory

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013

COVER *See listing for Get This Look for Less.*

CHECKLIST *(p. 14)* **Ceramic compost crock:** Gardener's Supply, gardeners.com.

HOME SOLUTIONS *(pp. 17–26)* Raise the bar for entertaining. **Bar cart.** Pier 1 Imports, pier1.com. Electric knife sharpeners: *Thanks to* Messermeister, messermeister.com. An organized office for $432. **Homeowners' blog:** Batchelors Way, batchelorsway.com.

BEFORE + AFTER KITCHEN: No bigger, lots brighter *(pp. 31–33,* **Contractor:** Seth Churchill, Churchill Brothers LLC, Sharon, CT, 860-364-5152. **Millwork:** Tallon Lumber, tallonlumber.com. **Herrington's:** edherrington.com. **Cabinetry:** Alfred Brown & Son Cabinetry, Bantam, CT, 860-567-7007. **Flooring:** Herrington's. **Range and hood:** Viking, vikingrange.com. **Cabinet hardware:** Whitechapel Ltd., whitechapelltd.com. **Countertops:** Rock Solid Marble and Granite, Sheffield, MA, rocksolidmandg.com. **Doors:** Simpson Door Company, simpsondoor.com. **Paint:** Castleton Mist (walls) and Decorators White (trim), Benjamin Moore, benjaminmoore.com.

BEFORE + AFTER BATH: Smarter layout, vintage details *(pp. 35–36,* **Designer:** Aimee Wertepny, Project Chicago, 773-394-1174. **Sink:** Kohler, kohler.com. **Sink faucet:** Fontaine Monaco, overstock.com. **Tile:** Ann Sacks, annsacks.com. **Ottoman,** Baker, bakerfurniture.com. **Sconces and chandelier:** Visual Comfort, visualcomfort.com. **Drapes:** Kravet, kravet.com. **Metallic wood wall covering:** innovations, innovationsusa.com. **Cabinet hardware:** RK International, rkintl.com. **Bathtub:** Vintage Tub & Bath, vintagetub.com. **Bathtub faucet:** American Bath Factory, americanbathfactory.com.

GET THIS LOOK FOR LESS: Colorful holiday hearth *(pp. 40–41)* **Stylist:** Jorge Arango, Mohegan Lake, NY, jsarango.com. **Magnolia-leaf and cedar garland:** Creekside Farms, Greenfield, CA, 831-262-7970; creeksidefarms.com.

PHOTOSHOP REDO: Giving a plain box period charm *(p. 46) Thanks to* Karl Anderson, Anderson Shirley Architects Inc., Salem, OR, 503-371-1140; andersonshirley.com. **Window:** Architectura Collection, Andersen, andersenwindows.com. **Paint:** 460F-5 Island Palm, 450E-3 Southern Breeze, and S-H-150 Chianti, Behr, behr.com. **Sconce:** Mission Bay outdoor wall lantern, Minka; minkagroup.net. **Hardware:** Ashfield Handleset Collection, Weiser, weiserlock.com.

BUILD IT OR BUY IT: Upholstered headboard *(pp. 50–51,* **Buy it options:** Vern Yip Upholstered Headboard Square with Nailhead Trim, hsn.com. Hillsdale Furniture Amber Upholstered Headboard; wayfair.com. Nailhead Upholstered Headboard, westelm.com.

WEEKEND REMODEL. Install a simple coffered ceiling *(pp. 59–65) Thanks to* Craig Tolmie, owner, Tide Mill Restoration, Fairfield, CT, 203-382-4656. **Designer-builder:** Christopher Beidel, Permit, Brooklyn, NY, permitstudio.com.

CLEANING UP A CLASSIC CRAFTSMAN *(pp. 82–87)* **Architect:** Brian C. Spector, Spector Architects, 831-595-4784. **Contractors:** Spencer Keenan and Taylor Darling, Santa Cruz Green Builders, santacruzgreenbuilders.com. **Exterior paint colors:** AF-460 Jojoba, AF-405 Thicket, and 2162-70 October Sky, Benjamin Moore, benjaminmoore.com. **Light fixtures:** Quoizel, quoizel.com. **Dining room table and chairs:** Warren Hile Studio, hilestudio.com. **Kitchen countertops:** ECO by Cosentino, ecobycosentino.com. **Sink fixtures:** Hansgrohe, hansgrohe-usa.com.

29 SUPER-FAST FIXES *(pp. 92–97) Thanks to* Scott Banzhaf, Berthoud Ace Hardware, Berthoud, CO; Vinyl Ladies, vinylladies.com; Charles Peterson, charlespetersonflooring.com; Tom Rubenoff, tomrubenoff.hubpages.com; Christophe Pourny, christophepourny.com.

ASK THIS OLD HOUSE *(pp. 99–105)* Can this house be saved? *Thanks to* Rachael Risinger, State Farm Public Affairs, New Hyde Park, NY; Peeling veneer: John Gozum, Product Development Specialist, 3M, Minneapolis. Question of the Month: *Thanks to* Steven Roca, Roca Custom Cabinetry, 914-671-7002. **Hinge:** 7183750 CL,P top Blumotion, Blum, blum.com.

SAVE THIS OLD HOUSE *(p. 114) Thanks to* Marty Corcoran, City of Maplewood, Maplewood, MO; cityofmaplewood.com; Douglas Miner, Douglas Houser.

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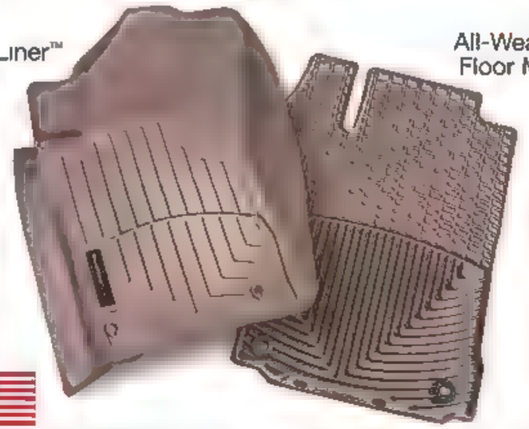

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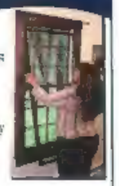

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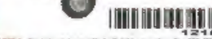

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THE HISTORY This grand farmhouse was built circa 1848 for State Senator Charles Rannells and his wife, Mary. The couple raised three children here, back when the home was part of their 2,200-acre estate. Their live-in staff tended the fields while Charles and Mary hobnobbed with prominent members of the community. Charles was even rumored to have rubbed elbows with Mark Twain and Ulysses S. Grant. In the 1920s, the house was sold and was used as a nursing home, reverting to a private residence in the 1970s. The city bought the house, vacant since 2000, in 2004 but has failed to fund its restoration. Now it's granting the place a 120-day stay of execution, during which time it must be sold—for less than the value of the land alone—to a new owner willing to restore it. If no buyer emerges, the house will be demolished and the lot cleared for sale.

WHY SAVE IT? The 3,397-square-foot structure blends elements of Greek and Gothic Revival styles and retains the original triangular dormers and trim. It's the oldest house in town, predating the incorporation of the city by 60 years.

WHAT IT NEEDS The house is structurally sound but needs all new systems. The city replaced the roof in 2005. In the more than 150 years since it was built, nearly all the farmland has been developed, leaving the original structure on a one-third-acre plot near the center of town, 10 minutes from St. Louis. Restoring the house is a big job, but your efforts will help ensure that it remains the heart of Maplewood for another century and a half or more. —PAUL HOPE

1] The five-bedroom, two-bath house is on an oversize corner lot, estimated to be worth $65,000. 2] This photograph from the 1890s provides a blueprint for the home's exterior restoration. 3] The front door, transom, and side lights. 4] The living room holds the dismantled front portico pieces, which await stripping, repainting, and reinstallation. Window and door head casings inside the house mirror those found on the exterior.

PHOTOS: DOUG HOUSER

GOT A HOUSE?

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GMC
WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE

YOU CAN LEARN A LOT FROM A SUBMARINE.

LOOKING AT SOMETHING THAT APPEARS TO BE WORKING PERFECTLY THEN DEMANDING TO MAKE IT BETTER REQUIRES A VERY UNIQUE MIND-SET. IT IS PRECISELY THIS KIND OF THINKING THAT WENT INTO THE BED OF THE ALL-NEW SIERRA. FOR YEARS, A STAMPED-STEEL BED WAS THE STANDARD, AND STILL IS WHEN IT COMES TO ALL THE OTHER GUYS. HOWEVER, AT GMC WE DECIDED TO USE A ROLLED-STEEL PROCESS FOR THE SAME REASON SUBMARINE HULLS DO: STRONGER, LIGHTER AND MORE DURABLE STEEL. YOU SEE, OUR ROLL-FORMING PROCESS ALLOWS THE USE OF HIGHER-STRENGTH STEEL VERSUS A TRADITIONAL STAMPED DESIGN. THIS ADAMANT DESIRE TO FIX THE UNBROKEN MAKES IT EASY TO SEE WHY THE ALL-NEW SIERRA IS MORE THAN JUST A TRUCK. IT'S INCREDIBLE THINKING IN THE FORM OF A TRUCK.

THE ALL-NEW 2014 SIERRA. THAT'S PROFESSIONAL GRADE.

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